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HIGHLAND SECOND-SIGHT.



# HIGHLAND SECOND-SIGHT

WITH

PROPHECIES OF COINNEACH ODHAR  
AND THE SEER OF PETTY

AND

NUMEROUS OTHER EXAMPLES FROM THE WRITINGS OF  
AUBREY, MARTIN, THEOPHILUS INSULANUS, THE REV.  
JOHN FRASER, DEAN OF ARGYLE AND THE ISLES,  
REV. DR KENNEDY OF DINGWALL,  
AND OTHERS.

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INTRODUCTORY STUDY BY

REV. WM. MORRISON, M.A., F.S.A.

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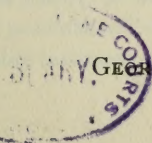
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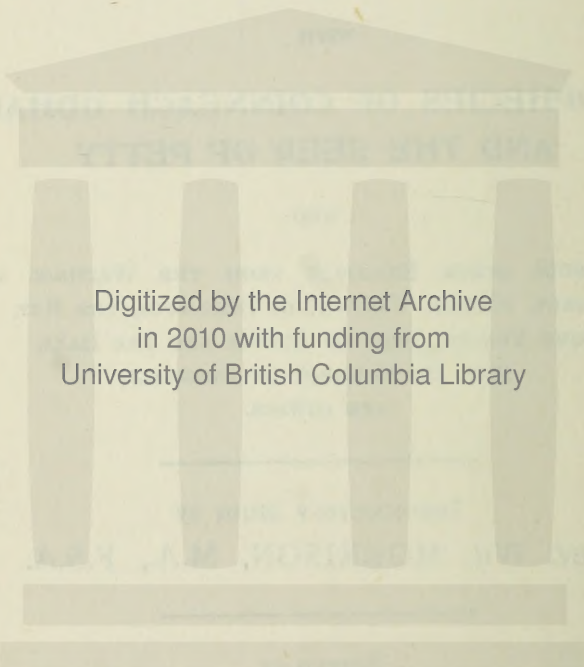
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## PREFATORY NOTE.



IN the Folk-Lore of the Scottish Highlanders there is no chapter more extraordinary or interesting in its way than that which deals with the stories of the Second-Sight—a “gift,” notwithstanding the ridicule of the unbelieving, that to the present day, in one or other of its manifestations, is not uncommon among the Highland people. There is no doubt that much of the merely traditional has gathered around the subject, but there still remains so considerable a body of well-authenticated facts that they deserve the closest study of Folk-Lorist and Psychologist alike. As facts, they certainly challenge enquiry and invite elucidation. It is hoped that the following pages will, therefore, prove as helpful to the serious student as, it is believed, they will be welcome to the general reader—not in the light of the superstitious or the merely curious, but as a subject of particular interest in view of present-day research in matters psychological.

The introductory study from the pen of the Rev. William Morrison, M.A., F.S.A. (Scot.), minister of the United Free Church of Duthil, should prove a valuable contribution to any enquiry into the nature and psychology of the “gift.” The references to the Second-Sight which are to be found in the principal early writers on the subject, as given in pages 25 to 95 inclusive, are here for the first time brought together in convenient form. The remaining pages deal with some modern instances known to the present writer, together with the well-known “predictions” of the Brahan and Petty Seers and those remarkable instances from the “Minister of Killearnan” written



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N. M.

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# HIGHLAND SECOND-SIGHT.

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## CHAPTER I.

### ITS NATURAL HISTORY.

The "Second-Sight" (Da-radharc, Da-shealladh, 'Taibhsearachd—the three Gaelic words have been used in this connection) is popularly believed to be a faculty of prophetic vision long supposed in the Scottish Highlands and elsewhere to belong to particular persons. As known in the Highlands of Scotland it has one feature in common with the oracular responses of old, that of being uttered by the subject of it when in a state of mental exaltation or even delirium. The Second-Sight is in every case regarded as troublesome to the possessor of it. It differs, however, from the class of divine prophecies or of heathen oracles, according to Bacon, and belongs rather to prophecies that have been, to use his words, "of certain memory and from hidden causes." This definition excludes it from the prophecies of St Columba, for example, and of other saints ancient and modern.

Three centuries ago men were divided in their opinions as to the source of the gift. Some held that it was akin to witchcraft, and hence ascribed it to the agency of the devil. Others held that as it was innocent in its operations it was due to the agency

of the fairies, the "good folk" who lived a twilight existence in mountain, stream, or grove. It is interesting to know from Bishop Callaway's Zulu tales that what Highlanders say of the fairies in this respect the Zulus say of the souls of their dead ancestors. That fairies haunt underground dwellings, cairns, or hillocks, places of sepulture where elf-arrows are found, all point to a common pre-historic belief. The fairies are known in the Highlands as "Daoine-sith," literally hill-folk. They are generally known as "Fiosaichin" or "those that know." Like the spirits in the *Inferno* of Dante, they know the future only. The fairies are also popularly known as "familiars," "co-walkers," "guardian spirits," "men's reflexes" or doubles. This opinion then as to the origin of the Second-Sight as an influence from the picturesque fairy world best accords with the popular conception of the Second-Sight.

The Second-Sight is, in every case, regarded as troublesome to the possessor. The vision of coming events is attended by a "nerve-storm," which ends in the complete prostration of the subject of it. Hence, it is not an enviable gift at the best. That it is not peculiar to the Highlands of Scotland is well known. Thus Mason Brown was met on the Coppermine River by the very Indians he was in search of, who told him their medicine-man had seen him coming and heard him talk. Captain J. Carver received from a Cree medicine-man a faithful prediction of the arrival next day at noon of a canoe with news, just as Martin in his "Western Isles" relates that in some of the places which he visited the people had made preparation for his company, telling him they had been informed by appearances that he was

coming to visit them, and as Waldron, the Manx historian, tells how on visiting families in the Isle of Man he found the table spread and the people prepared to receive him—having had some supernatural warning that he was coming.

These Cree and Coppermine instances show the futility of restricting this “mental phenomenon” to Scottish Highlanders, and hence of attempting to account for its existence among them solely on racial grounds. For example, we have some remarkable instances recorded in Watson’s “Life and Times of the Rev. Alexander Peden,” and in Thomas of Ercildoune we have a “prophet” who holds south of the Grampians the same place in the popular folk-lore as does Kenneth Odhar (the Brahan Seer) in the Scottish Highlands. Rowland in his “Mona Antiqua” regards as an instance of Second-Sight the story, related by Vopiscus, of a Druidess who predicted that Diocletian, while a private man, should become Emperor, after killing a boar, which happened to prove true by his slaying Aper, who had killed Numerianus. Among the Manx the faculty is commonly believed to have been the gift of not a few of the islanders in times past. And to go further back, Solinus asserts that among the Silures the Durmonii had a knowledge of futurity, while Tacitus credits the Germans with skill in telling future events.

But while the gift has not been confined to the Scottish Highlands—and in one or other of its forms no less an authority than Andrew Lang has found it also among Australians, Tonkaways, Aztecs, Incas, Samoyeds, Polynesians, Maories, Greeks and Egyptians—it is from Scottish Highland sources that we have



by far the greater number of recorded instances. This has no reference to auguries and divinations, with the various methods of "consulting the fates"—by divining stones, enveloping one's self in a cow's hide and being left alone for the night, the waiting for whole nights at the tombs of brave men, or the "Taigh-ghairm," which consisted in putting a live cat on a spit and roasting it until other cats made their appearance and gave the answers that were sought for—which were prevalent among the early Highlanders. The gift of the "Second-Sight"—properly so called—is not exactly of the same order; and, although the Brahan Seer is said to have used a small divining stone, a circular pebble with a hole in the centre through which he is said to have looked when about to "foretell," the use of any such "aids" is not resorted to by the possessors of the gift. Those having the "two sights" (among the more modern instances in the Scottish Highlands) were and are apparently independent of all or any extraneous aids, and there is no resort to the mysterious mummary associated with the old-time divinations. The Second-Sighters, as Logan puts it, "without any previous warning see something that is to happen, both at a distance of time and place, and consequently can foretell death or accident and many other circumstances." Strictly speaking the Second-Sight is not ghost-seeing, although those who possess the faculty do claim to have the power of seeing apparitions or visions, which they interpret in terms of, or associate with, events which they are thereby enabled to foretell. But the Second-Sight may be independent of any "vision," and more frequently the Seer is able spontaneously, as if from certain knowledge, to tell

of events that are to happen. To quote Logan again—"To suppose that the seers are imposters and the people deluded, is rather too much, for no gain is derived from it, but on the contrary the Second-Sight is, by the persons who possess it, considered a misfortune; the presages also are usually unfortunate . . and so many instances of well-authenticated foresights are recorded as appear sufficient to silence the sceptical."

The Second-Sight may excite the surprise and the incredulity of the learned, but of its existence, even in some Highlanders to the present day, there is not the shadow of a doubt in the minds of many who have certain knowledge of instances that can admit of no dubiety whatsoever. There may not to-day be the same faculty of foretelling events in the more distant future, as in one or two of the Brahan Seer's trustworthy forecasts, but it is undoubted that many Highlanders still living are able—in the true "Second-Sight" manner—to "see something that is to happen." Apart from the many instances given in the present work from the various sources laid under contribution by Mr Macrae, and these include examples from a writer as recent—and as sane—as the late Rev. Dr Kennedy of Dingwall, there are others which the present writer can vouch for as actual occurrences within his own knowledge. Indeed, among Highlanders generally the existence of the "gift" is regarded as a fact indisputable, and in almost every one of the more rural communities there are one or more persons who are known to have the power of "seeing" what may be taking place, or may be about to take place, in their own immediate neighbourhood, or, it may be, many miles away.

The literature of the subject stretches back for some two hundred years. In 1685, George Sinclair, "Professor of Philosophy in the College of Glasgow," published his "Satan's Invisible World Discovered," and in 1691, "Mr Robert Kirk, Minister at Aberfoill," published his "Secret Commonwealth," which is the best of the earliest works on the subject. That the Second-Sight, even in those days of ignorance and intolerance, was not classed with witchcraft, and so deemed a crime to be expiated by death, is seen from the fact that ministers of the Gospel, such as Mr Kirk, not only investigated the subject and recorded instances, but held it perfectly legitimate for them to do so. Kirk was followed by another worthy minister in the same field—Mr Frazer of Coll and Tiree, who was Dean of the Isles. In 1707 he published his "Brief Discourse of the Second-Sight commonly so-called." Fellows of the Royal Society again, such as John Aubrey in 1692 and Pepys of Diary fame in 1696-1700, took up the subject. Pepys had correspondents such as Lord Reay, Lord Tarbat, and Dr Hicks, all of whose letters are to be found printed with the Diary. Martin, in his "Description of the Western Islands of Scotland," published in 1716; Macleod of Hamir, in Skye, under the title of "Theophilus Insulanus," 1763, and Dr Samuel Johnson in his "Journey to the Hebrides" in 1795—all treat fully of the Second-Sight as an undoubted fact, though they were at a loss to explain the cause of it. Johnson's verdict is well known—he "came away at last only willing to believe." Incidentally it is referred to in Scott's "Demonology and Witchcraft," and in Kirkpatrick Sharpe's "History of Witchcraft in Scotland," which he prepared as an

Introduction to the "Memorials" of the Rev. Robert Law. A "History of Witches, Ghosts, and Highland Seers" was published about the year 1803 by R. Taylor, Berwick, and in 1820 there was "printed for D. Webster" in Edinburgh "A Collection of Rare and Curious Tracts on Witchcraft and the Second-Sight." The curious will also find some materials for a closer study of the subject in Woodrow's "Analecta," Sir George Mackenzie's "Laws and Customes of Scotland in Matters Criminal," and in Pitcairn's "Criminal Trials." In the more recent literature we have Mackenzie's "Prophecies of the Brahan Seer," Campbell's "Prophecies of the Petty Seer," and quite a number of modern instances vouched for by the late Rev. Dr Kennedy of Dingwall in his "Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire," but more particularly in connection with his father, the Rev. John Kennedy of Redcastle, some of whose "fore-sights" were certainly remarkable. Dr Kennedy (who died in 1884) records his instances as "indubitable facts," and, by the way, it is interesting to note that in anticipating the "sneers of some as they read them" he says:—

"A little careful thinking on the subject might help one to see that, by means of the written word, under the guiding hand of His Spirit, the Lord may give intimations of His will in a way very different from the direct inspiration of prophecy, and that ends are served by such communications of His mind that make it far from improbable the Lord may have given them—for thereby His servants are encouraged, their hands are strengthened in their work, and proof is pressed on the consciences of the ungodly, that the true Israel of God are a 'people near unto Him.' And it is to simple and uneducated people, unable to appreciate the standing evidences of the gospel, we might expect the Lord to give such tokens of His presence with those who preach it. The improbability of such things, to the minds of some, is owing

to their own utter estrangement from the Lord. This is not the only secret, connected with a life of godliness, which is hidden from them."

Although the Second-Sight is known to be a "possession" in the unhappy experience of numbers of persons of the present day in the Highlands, the "gift" is not so prevalent as formerly. This was noted by Logan himself, who says that the reason for this "may arise from the altered state of society in the Highlands, the people not being obliged to lead that solitary life which they formerly did, when the imagination was affected by the loneliness, the wildness, and seclusion of the country." This may, or may not, suggest a possible explanation for the occurrence of the faculty among Scottish Highlanders, but in any inquiry into the natural history of Second-Sight the racial genius of the Highland people cannot be overlooked. In this connection it will not be out of place to note that it is historically true that the Highlanders, in the North and West of Scotland, have a strong strain of Norse blood, and that where the Celtic blood predominates, as in Ireland and France, the temperament is characterised by a hilarity and fickleness which is markedly absent in the Highlands. Whether it be true, as Dr Beddoe says, "that it is curious that wherever in the North of Scotland Scandinavian blood abounds nervous disorders prevail"—I cannot say so for want of sufficient evidence. But in any case it is undoubted that the character and temperament of the Scottish Highlander are influenced by the conditions amid which he lives. Stormy seas, mountain ranges, and desolate tracts of moorland produce a spirit of hardihood and, at the same time, a steadfastness of purpose in their lives that may



seem to be gloom, but in reality is but seriousness engendered by their conflict with the stern spirit of their environment. The Islanders of the West, for example, make capital seamen. It has been observed by competent judges that, instead of their being benumbed by terror when at sea in a storm their spirits rather "brighten as they burn," so that the greater the danger the more concentrated and cooler their efforts are to surmount it. Feeling and imagination are for the time kept under control in every such crisis. Doubtless they have inherited much of this coolness with their Norse blood. "Impulses," believed to be due to the "powers of darkness," have been observed in men of stern mould, which move them to feelings of intense enjoyment, yea, to peals of almost superhuman laughter, in the acme of their conflict with waves or men. The Norse Sagas are full of such instances. Timidity with such men, therefore, cannot conjure up spirits of terror for them.

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As already noted, forecasting the future, as in the Second-Sight, is not limited to Scottish Highlanders. Both Cæsar and Tacitus record that this gift of forecasting the future was especially well known to exist among the Germanic races. We know from the earliest of Scandinavian literature extant the high renown of "The Song of the Prophetess," known as the "Voluspa." The afflatus of prophecy was invariably accompanied by intense excitement during the delivery of the oracular responses by the prophetess. In Ancient Greece the Pythia's solemn oracular responses were invariably delivered when she was in a state of delirium owing, it is said, to the gases arising from the floor of the shrine of the temple at Delphi.

As for the visions seen by persons in this state of nervous exaltation, the fact is well known to medical men as one of the symptoms of a diseased brain, where the visual power may be impaired, lost, exalted, or perverted. Dr Forbes Winslow quotes

a case recorded by Aristotle of a certain Antipheron, who, when he was walking, saw a phantasmal reflexion of himself advancing towards him. A traveller who has passed a long time without sleeping perceived one night his own image, which rode by his side. It imitated all his actions. The horseman having to cross a river, the phantom passed over it with him. Having arrived at a place where the mist was less thick this curious apparition vanished. Goethe relates that he had a similar experience. Dr Forbes Winslow gives several instances in his work on "Obscure Diseases of the Brain and Mind" which may be matched by several known instances of the Second-Sight, and doubtless due to morbid states of the brain.

## CHAPTER II.

### WHAT IS THE SECOND-SIGHT?

It is a matter of ordinary observation that there is an analogy between the different stages of mental growth in the individual and in those of a community or even of an age. The individual is but an epitome of an age. It is but the simple truth to say that in the Highlands of Scotland to-day many are in a state of pupilarity as regards their mental attitude to this question of the "Second-Sight." Hence, to understand them, as Coleridge would have it, we must first understand their ignorances. We need not be astonished, therefore, that men such as George Sinclair, Professor of Mathematics in the University of Glasgow, in 1654-96, should, notwithstanding all his acquaintance with the exact sciences, be unable to rise above the gross delusions of his age. His book, "Satan's Invisible World Discovered," was at one time a great favourite with the public in Scotland. Sinclair's acquaintance with witches, ghosts, and all forms of "diablerie" is amazing. This book was written with the laudable object of meeting the attacks of "atheists and Sadducees." He adduced not only instances from ancient and modern history in confirmation of the belief in a spiritual world but the testimony of living persons who could say that with their own eyes they had seen the Enemy of Man himself in his own proper person. Sinclair has not much to say of the Second-Sight beyond stating that he is credibly "informed that men and

women in the Highlands can discern fatality approaching others by seeing them in waters or with winding sheets about them." He heard also that "others can lecture (read) in a sheep's shoulder-bone a death within the parish seven or eight days before it come." Crystal-gazing, doubtless, was not known on account of the rarity of glass in those days among the Highlanders.

Sinclair sagely accounts for the Second-Sight on the ground that such preternatural knowledge comes "first by a compact with the Devil, and is derived downwards by succession to their posterity." However, to do Sinclair justice, he puts in a saving clause, on the score of humanity, when he says that "many of the latter are innocent and have the 'Second-Sight' against their will and inclination." He makes the foregoing statement wholly on insufficient grounds, for no instance is recorded among Highlanders of there being any compact with the Devil.

It is interesting to find that in the century preceding that of Sinclair's, a writer such as Montaigne in his Essay on "Prognostications," casts discredit on such predictions as foibles, by showing that long before our Saviour was born even the heathen had ceased to believe in oracles. He expressly held that "divination by means of the stars, spirits, shapes of the body (i.e. ghosts), and dreams, was mere foolish curiosity, inasmuch as if we had not enough to occupy ourselves with the present." He quotes with approbation the words of Cicero in his work on "The Nature of the Gods," where he says that, "even if some such predictions turn out to be verified, they deserve no more credit than the man does who, by shooting all day, should now and again hit the white." Bacon,

as we have seen, adapts this aphorism in his Essay on "Prophecies," viz., that "men never mark when they miss." "In themselves," says Montaigne, "these predictions are neither better nor worse because they prove to be true."

"Theophilus Insulanus," believed to be a certain Mr Macpherson, minister in the Isle of Skye, late in the 18th century, has his misgivings as to the supernatural origin of the instances which he so diligently records. He seems to find a partial solution for the visions "in the spectres seen in certain states of the atmosphere" forming such appearances as the "spectre of the Brocken," the "Fata Morgana," and the "Mirage of the Desert," where images of persons and places are seen, as it were, suspended in the air. He finds ground to believe that these physical phenomena excite hallucinations "in minds of a melancholy cast," in those having "weakness of sight," and, last of all, "through the levity of the narrator." This last surely is a great concession to common-sense, and that in a man living in a time when his environment was so unfavourable to the influence of the "dry light" of reason.

It is quite the fact that most of the instances recorded are associated with presages of death or of some other calamity. The melancholy tinge habitual to the minds of our countrymen in the Highlands, whether generated by their surroundings or whether inherited, is certain to be deepened by the circumstances attending political and social stress and storm such as passed over the Highlands during not only the time of their clan feuds, but still more so during the several Jacobite Risings which ended with Culloden in 1746. As one instance among many that might be given, we



have on the testimony of Martin, in his "Description of the Western Isles," the story of a Seer in the Isle of Eig "who frequently saw an apparition of a man in a red coat lined with blue, and having on his head a strange sort of blue cap with a very high cock on the fore part of it, and that the man who there appeared was kissing a comely maid in the village where the Seer dwelt." "This unusual vision," Martin adds, "was discredited until about a year and a half after the late Revolution (1688) when one Major Ferguson, now Colonel of one of her Majesty's regiments of foot, landed on the island with six hundred men to reduce the islanders that had appeared for K. J." These men worked their will on the wretched inhabitants. Martin says he was told "at Edinburgh of the prediction in September 1688, and that there were present the Laird of Macleod, and Mr Alexander Macleod, advocate, and others." That is to say, Martin heard of the vision fully a year and a half before the event recorded above. Visions of red coats and sloops of war were common enough in other parts of the Highlands and Islands, though as yet unknown in the little Island of Eigg.

On the morning of the famous "Retreat of Moy," when, by the heroic conduct of Lady Mackintosh, aided by the few men left her of those who had joined "Prince Charlie's" army, a surprise party, sent by the Earl of Loudon from Inverness to seize the Prince at Moy, was ignominiously routed, and one Donald Macrimmon, hereditary piper to Macleod of Dunvegan, was, among others, killed, a friend of the piper's, one Patrick Macaskill, told Theophilus that he, on parting with Macrimmon, on the streets of Inverness, that morning, saw his friend, a six-footer, dwindle



suddenly to the dimensions of a boy of twelve years of age and as suddenly resume his natural stature. To Macaskill, by one of the known canons of the lore of the Second-Sight, this was a certain presage of death. Tradition has it that Macrimmon himself, perhaps from his own misgivings as to the righteousness of the cause in which he was compelled to follow his chief, played the "Lament" since known by his name, as he embarked at Dunvegan and bade eternal adieu to his beloved Isle of Skye.

Let me quote one other instance of the Second-Sight, about which the candid reader may have his doubts as to the reality of the supernatural element in it. One Donald Macleod is the narrator, and he is spoken of as "a man of high descent," and of course above all suspicions of untruthfulness. This man tells Theophilus that "a certain young girl was contracted to a gentleman in Lewis equal to her in birth and other circumstances." A Seer who lived in the family frequently told the young lady that she should never be married to that gentleman. "Even when the parson came to join their hands, the bride and bridegroom being completely dressed and ready waiting to fulfil the ceremony, the Seer persisted in what he had often asserted. The bride having occasion to leave the room for a moment was met by a gentleman at the head of twelve persons, who carried her to a boat hard by and conducted her to an island at some distance from the mainland." Here she remained for some time and was eventually married to her captor. "Thus," says Theophilus, "was the Seer's prediction fulfilled." Is there not in this story any hint of collusion between that Seer and that "gentleman" captor?

Many modern instances might be given of the prevalence of the Second-Sight throughout the Highlands, especially in the more remote districts. I have known of one where all the usual symptoms of a cataleptic fit showed themselves. The "seer" turned ghastly pale, sickened, walked out to a little streamlet near the house, by crossing and re-crossing which he found relief and returned to the house and told what he saw. The matter was trivial, but it was literally fulfilled, in all its details, a few days afterwards.

I know of a north-country minister, whose zeal perhaps outran his discretion in denouncing some fixed, but superstitious, notions among his people. He rarely had his teeth out of them. The result was that on a dark night in winter an assault was made on him as he was driving through a dense wood. A huge tree fell right across the road, and nearly overwhelmed the minister and his man as they came along. Next Sunday the congregation were startled not only by hearing of this cowardly assault on their minister, but to learn at the same time from him that he "had it given him" to say that three men were engaged in the assault, none of whom would leave this world without being punished—one was to die a sudden death, another to die "where he'd have but the burial of an ass," and the third was to suffer poverty, if not indigence, before he died. Rumour had it, to my knowledge, that the prediction was literally fulfilled.

Much may be explained on natural grounds in regard to the phenomena of the Second-Sight. The Father of History, Herodotus, long ago surmised that many of the so-called prophecies of the oracles of old were based on a calculation of probabilities.

What was done consciously by interested priests in Ancient Egypt, is often sub-consciously done by simple people tricked by their own excited feelings into giving reality to mere delusions of their senses of seeing and hearing. Many stories of the Second-Sight were but "ex post facto" (after the event) predictions. Our knowledge of the past is the ground on which we base our conjectures as to the future. Hence no Seer has predicted railways, steamships, electric telegraphs, and the thousand and one feats of science.\* His imagination made use of the material stored up in his memory, which, when "bodied forth in vision" was given "a local habitation and a name." Waking dreams—or reveries—are common enough. When such are combined with any high degree of probability of an event, either feared or desired, and where the event justified his expectation, then the tendency was to refer the vision to a supernatural source and not to merely natural causes.

In the moral world the same thing happens. Socrates believed that he was guided by a divine spirit—"a daimon"—in regulating his desires and inclinations, even when he could not at the time give any satisfactory reason for his course of action. "The still small voice" within us all is the infallible guide of those who give earnest heed to its monitions. They

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\* This has no reference to the generally accepted interpretation, for instance, of several of the Brahan Seer's prophecies, as recorded further on in the present work. Coinneach Odhar is held to have foretold the advent of railways when he said that "the day will come when long strings of carriages without horses shall run between Dingwall and Inverness," and also in his reference to the "chariot without horse or bridle," but this does not invalidate our contention.

may not be philosophers to say why they do so. Socrates, as Montaigne says, had so disciplined himself in virtue that he felt that the slightest prompting of a desire or inclination was weighty enough in authority for him to follow it unhesitatingly. What Socrates thus referred to a supernatural source, Kant demonstrated to be wholly natural. The "daimon" of the one and the "Categorical Inspiration" of the other are but the moral judgments flashed upon the inner eye, which by us all is called conscience. When similarly rapid judgments as to probable events are formed and thrown on the screen of the external world in combination with physical forms which fancy weaves in association with those judgments, both eye and mind see, as it were, beyond the bounds of space and time into that state where all is One Eternal Now, and thus the Seer is wrapt, as he believes, into the future to behold things that are to come, and which people, for want of a better word, term the "Second-Sight"—though literally and in truth, as an old writer observed, the vision if really afterwards realised, should rather be termed not the SECOND, but the FIRST-Sight of that event.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SECOND-SIGHT.

Second-Sighted men not only see and hear things relating to the future, but, as I have said, they can see, at times, the very beings themselves who bring the intelligence to them. Men of the Second sight are believed to see and hear what flesh and blood cannot of themselves see and hear. The Red Indians of America, for instance, believe that all things have their double, their counterpart, and father, but that the Second-Sighted alone can distinguish the substantial part from that which corresponds to it.

Kirk was told, in his day, that all men have their doubles, guardian angels, or apes, perfectly resembling the original, as shadow does to substance. The *seer* or *tabhaister*, according to the same authority, was he who had these familiars most under his command, who could "call spirits from the vasty deep," and who must "come." He adds, however, that such spirits were seldom the messengers of good men.

Bacon, with his luminous insight into the mind of man, in his Essay on "Prophecies," says he does not mean to speak of divine prophecies, nor of heathen oracles, nor of natural predictions, but only of prophecies that have been of certain memory and from hidden causes. He passes several such under review, and sums up his judgment regarding them by stating in explicit terms that "they ought all to be despised and ought to serve but for winter talk by the fireside." For moral ends they are indeed



worse than useless, for if the gift of foreseeing future events in our lives were universal, there would be no place for freedom of the will to adapt means to ends. Omnipotence alone can avert what is seen to be inevitable.

Bacon specifies three things which have given these prophecies "grace and some credit," viz.:—"First, that men mark when they hit and never mark when they miss, as they do," he adds, "generally also in dreams." The second is, that "probable conjectures or obscure traditions many times turn themselves into prophecies, while the nature of man which coveteth divination thinks no peril to foretell that which indeed they do but collect." "The Third and last (which is the great one) is, that almost all of them being infinite in number, have been impostures, and by idle and crafty brains merely contrived and feigned after the event passed."

The evidence we have in abundance regarding the Second-Sight does not, I think, lead us to place the Second-Sight under this third head. The circumstantiality of the instances recorded and observed by judicially-minded men therefore rules this third principle out of court. Our belief in the Second-Sight may not rise to a certainty, but it is sufficient to justify an honest investigation into the causes of this curious mental phenomenon.

Hallucination, hypnotism, auto-suggestion may account for some of them, but not for many remarkable instances of undoubted Second-Sight. I am inclined to believe that Second-Sight comes rather under the second cause given by Bacon. In his statement of it, he puts the whole thing in a nut-shell. "Probable conjectures," raised by the subtle and rapid action of



the judgment, aided again by the plastic power of the imagination, to the height of a moral certainty that the event conjectured SHALL take place. The fantasy supplies the conception of this certainty with lines and colours borrowed from the outward world in which the event is to be in all probability localised. To men with emotional natures, no limit can be put to the plastic power of imagination thus stimulated by suggestion as to forecasting any probable event. The figure in rhetoric, known as "vision," is a familiar example. Who has not heard of the orator who so powerfully impressed an audience of fishermen by his vivid description of a shipwreck that the startling cry of "Man the life-boat!" was raised instinctively by the whole of his audience. They SAW the ship sinking, in vision, before their eyes.

In or about 1760 the whole world was startled by the matter-of-fact, detailed account which that "great intellectual athlete," Swedenborg, gave of his communications with the world of spirits. Among those who were overwhelmed by the circumstantiality of those "experiences" of Swedenborg's, was the great philosopher Kant himself—the clearest head and the calmest heart of that time. Kant, the immortal author of the "Critic of Pure Reason," was induced to examine the whole question of these visions, and to publish his judgments on them in his book "Dreams of a Visionary Explained by Dreams of Metaphysics." Kant asked himself such questions as—"What is Spirit? How is its presence detected? How is spirit related to matter and why does a spirit and body constitute a unity?" He held that these questions transcend our intelligence. In our present life, the soul has relations with two worlds—the inner

one of mind and the outer of matter. But "departed souls and pure spirits," says Kant, "though they can never produce an impression upon our outward senses, or stand in any community with matter, can still act upon the soul of man, which, like them, belongs to a great spirit commonwealth." Kant does not decide for or against this alleged intercourse between pure spirits and men in the flesh. "I reserve my scepticism," he says, "about each story separately while allowing them some credibility as a whole."

Kant was clearly of the same mind as Bacon that "symbolic conceptions of a sensuous kind" were associated with certain ideas which arose in the mind by whatever cause—suggestions, etc. Such associations are formed, he says, in persons of a peculiar temperament. At certain times, he adds, such seers are assailed by apparitions "which, however, are not, as they suppose, spiritual natures, but only an illusion of the imagination which substitutes its pictures for the real spiritual influences imperceptible to the gross human soul."

Prophecies then of the Second-Sight order are not altogether illusions—though their accompaniments of vision are—but the lines of probable judgments may converge to a focus, and this focus thrown upon the screen of our imagination so withdraws the attention by the vividness of the vision that consciousness is diverted from a belief in its inwardness of the picture to a belief in its outwardness in the world of space and time as is the manner of all dreams. If the conjecture fall out to be true, we mark it, and if not the dream passes into oblivion to give place to others as evanescent, unless some event fix and transmute the form and colour of the dream into a seeming reality.

The Psychical Research Society may throw light on this as upon other questions of our mundane life, which at present are shrouded in the deepest darkness of mystery. So far nothing has been done but conjuring with words and phrases, mere "chimerical devices" to while away idle hours.

To summarise then what we have said as to the probable origin or nature of the Second-Sight, we recognise that in the physical processes where sight and sound are most engaged the effects of past experience are the most enduring in consciousness. The retention by the brain of the changes impressed upon it by impact through the nerves of the world of sense forms, as it were, the store-house of memory. By the law of association no imagery ever comes to the front in consciousness unless it has been somehow connected with our previous experience. That law of association has been by psychologists recognised as of several types, viz., association by contiguity, association by similarity, contrast, etc. In the phenomenon of Second-Sight the mode of operation is less that of the "productive" than it is of the "re-productive" imagination, and this latter under the sub-conscious influence of the emotions of hope, fear, etc., as the case may be. The elements which go to the formation of the image so formed are, as has been remarked, drawn from our experiences of the past. In ordinary everyday life this procedure is the means by which we ordinarily forecast the future. By it we are enabled so to focalise our experiences of the past as to have them as a guide or pole-star to our line of action in the future. This analysis of Second-Sight is suggested by all the observed facts of this peculiar

mutual phenomenon. Some facts connected with it, however, lack vividness in form and colour, and in our twilight of dubiety regarding their full significance we are tempted to take refuge in the all-embracing truth that "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy."

But whatever the Second-Sight may be, and whether any explanation on psychological or other grounds is possible or not, the subject is one of perennial interest to Highlanders as a chapter in the history of their people which may be read with profit at least "in winter time by the fireside."

## CHAPTER IV.

### MARTIN'S ACCOUNT OF THE SECOND-SIGHT.

“The Second-Sight,” says Martin, in his Description of the Western Isles of Scotland, “is a singular faculty of seeing an otherwise invisible object, without any previous means used by the person that sees it for that end; the vision makes such a lively impression upon the Seers, that they neither see nor think of anything else, except the vision, as long as it continues; and then they appear pensive or jovial, according to the object which was represented to them. At the sight of the vision, the eyelids of the person are erected, and the eyes continue staring until the object vanish. This is obvious to others who are by, when the persons happen to see a vision, and occurred more than once to my own observation, and to others that were with me. There is one in Skye, of whom his acquaintance observed, that when he sees a vision, the inner part of his eyelids turn so far upwards, that after the object disappears, he must draw them down with his fingers, and sometimes employs others to draw them down, which he finds to be much the easier way. This faculty of the Second-Sight does not lineally descend in a family, as some imagine, for I know several parents who are endowed with it, but their children are not, ‘et vice versa’; neither is it acquired by any previous compact. And after a strict inquiry, I could never learn from any among them, that this faculty was communicable in any way whatsoever. The Seer knows neither the

object, time, nor place of vision, before it appears; and the same object is often seen by different persons, living at a considerable distance from one another. The true way of judging as to the time and circumstance of an object, is by observation; for several persons of judgment, without this faculty, are more capable to judge of the design of a vision, than a novice that is a Seer. If an object appear in the day or night, it will come to pass sooner or later accordingly. If an object is seen early in a morning (which is not frequent) it will be accomplished in a few hours afterwards. If at noon it will commonly be accomplished that day. If in the evening perhaps that night; if after candles be lighted it will be accomplished that night. When a shroud is perceived it is a sure prognostic of death, the time is judged according to the height of it about the person; for if it is not seen above the middle death is not to be expected for the space of a year; if seen higher than the head death is not far off. Examples of this kind," says Martin, "were shown me, when the person of whom the observation then made enjoyed perfect health. All presages, however, are not of a doleful cast. For example, if a woman is seen standing at a man's left hand, she will be his wife whether each be married or unmarried at the time of the apparition. If two or three women are seen standing near a man's left hand, she that is next him will undoubtedly be his wife first, and so on."

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Martin gravely tells us that things are also foretold by smelling, but that this avenue is open to many that are not endowed with the Second-Sight. He as gravely adds that children, horses, and cows



have the Second-Sight as well as men and women advanced in years. He gives instances of each.

Martin in answer to objectors in his day who held that Seers were visionary and melancholy people—who were deceived by such visions—states what really is still true, that the people, including the Seers, are very temperate, and their diet simple and moderate in quantity and quality—"so that their brains are not in all probability disordered by undigested fumes of meat or drink."

It is observed, he says, that a man drunk never sees the Second-Sight.

To others who maintain that the Seers are impostors and that the people are credulous, Martin replies that the Seers are generally illiterate and well meaning. The people, he holds, are astute enough to suspend their judgment until the thing foretold is accomplished.

An instance is given of a man who saw at noonday five men on horseback riding northward in the Isle of Skye. When he came to the roadside they had vanished. Next day he saw Sir Donald Macdonald and his retinue, who at the time of the vision were at Armadale, nearly forty miles south from the place where the man lived. This man had never seen a "vision" before or after that day.

Exorcism in one instance is given by Martin. A woman in Stornoway was cured of seeing visions by water from the baptismal font being sprinkled on her face.

He gives two instances on the authority of John Morison, "a person of unquestionable sincerity and reputation," who told him of a girl of twelve years of age that was troubled at the frequent sight of

her own double. The girl's parents consulted John Morison, who found that as she was ignorant of the principles of religion, forthwith set himself to teach her the creed, the ten commandments, and the Lord's Prayer. The good man's prayers with and on behalf of the girl "delivered her from the trouble of such a vision" ever after.

The other instance is quite as telling a case of "delivery." A man living three miles to the north of the said John Morison was much haunted by a spirit, appearing in all points like to himself. This spirit asked the man when at work out of doors many impertinent questions, but never when he was at home. The spirit appeared to no one but to the man himself, who, however, got rid of his impertinent double by casting a live coal, as he was advised, in the face of the spirit. The spirit, it seems, resented the affront, and next day met the man in the fields, when he beat him so severely that the poor man had to keep his bed for a fortnight after. Mr Morison, minister of the parish, and several of his friends came to see the man, and joined in prayer that he might be freed from this trouble, "but he was still haunted by that spirit," adds Martin, "a year after I left Lewis."

## CHAPTER V.

### FRAZER OF TIREE ON THE SECOND-SIGHT.

“Deuterosophia (Second-Knowledge), or A Brief Discourse concerning Second-Sight, commonly so-called, by the Rev. John Frazer, deceased, late minister of Tiree and Coll, and Dean of the Isles.”—“Pub. by Mr Andw. Symson, Edin.: 1707.”

To Rt. Hon. Universally Learned and My very Singular Good Lord Geo., E. of Cromartie, Viscount of Tarbat, Lord M'Leod and Castlehaven, etc.

“Many have undertaken to treat of the nature and operations of spirits, as also of the various manners of divination among the Gentiles (and but too much used among Christians), likewise of the Perturbation and Deception of the Fancy, caused by Melancholy. And very many speak in ordinary discourses of this, called the Second-Sight, and the consequences of it; but none, that I know, handle it ‘in Titulo.’

“That such representations are made to the eyes of men and women is to me out of all doubt, and that effects follow answerable thereunto, as little questionable. But I have found so many doubt the matter of fact, which I take to be the reason that so little has been written of it, that I think it necessary to say something briefly that may put the existence of it beyond all scruple, if I should insert all the

clear instances that I had of this matter. Therefore, I will satisfy the reader with four or five instances, as follows:—

“The first instance is by a servant of my own, who had the trust of my barn, and nightly lay in the same. One day he told me he would not any longer lye there, because nightly he had seen a dead corpse in his winding sheet straighted beside him, particularly at the south side of the barn. About an half-year thereafter a young man, that had formerly been my servant, dangerously sick and expecting death, would needs be carried near my house, and shortly thereafter he died, and was laid up a night before he was buried in the same individual barn and place that was foretold, and immediately the servant that foretold this and came to me and minded me of the prediction, which was clearly out of my mind till he spoke of it.

“The second instance is after this manner. I was resolved to pay a visite to an English gentleman, Sir William Sacheverill, who had a commission from the English Court of Admiralty to give his best tryall to find out gold or money, or any other thing of note, in one of the ships of the Spanish Armada that was blown up in the Bay of Topper-Mory, in the Sound of Mull. And having condescended upon the number of men that were to go with me, one of the number was a handsome boy that waited upon my own person, and, about an hour before I made sail, a woman, that was also one of my own servants, spoke to one of the seamen and bade him dissuade me to take that boy along with me, or, if I did, I should not bring him back alive. The seaman answered he had not confidence to tell me such unwarrantable

trifles. I took my voyage and sailed the length of Topper-Mory, and having stayed two or three nights with a Literat and Ingenious Gentleman, who himself had collected many observations of the Second-Sight in the Isle of Man, and compared his notes and mine together, in the end I took leave of him. In the meantime my boy grew sick of a vehement bloody flux, the winds turned so cross that I could neither sail nor row. The boy died with me the eleventh night from his decumbiture, and the seaman to whom the matter was foretold related the whole story when he saw it verified. I carried the boy's corpse aboard with me, and after my arrival and his burial I called suddenly for the woman and asked at her what warrand she had to foretell the boy's death. She said that she had no other warrand but that she saw two days before I took my voyage the boy walking with me in the fields, sewed up in his winding sheets from top to toe, and that she had never seen this in others but that she found that they shortly thereafter died, and therefore concluded that he would die too, and that shortly.

"The third instance was thus: Duncan Campbell, brother-german to Archibald Campbell of Invere, a gentleman of singular piety and considerable knowledge, especially in Divinity, told me a strange thing of himself; that he was at a time in Kintyre, having then some employment there, and one morning walking in the fields he saw a dozen of men carrying a bier and knew them all but one, and when he looked again all was evanished. The very next day the same company came the same way carrying a bier, and he going to meet them found that they were but eleven in number, and that himself was the



twelfth, though he did not notice it before, and it is to be observed that this gentleman never saw anything of this kind before or after, till his dying day. Moreover that he was of such solid judgment and devote conversation that his report deserves an unquestionable credit.

“The fourth instance I had, to my great grief, from one John Macdonald, a servant of Lauchane Maclean of Coll, who was then newly returned from Holland, having the charge of a Captain. This gentleman came one afternoon abroad to his pastime in the fields, and this John Macdonald meets him, and seeth his cloaths shineing like the skins of fishes and his periwig all wett, tho’ indeed the day was very fair, whereupon he told me privately, even then to one of Cols gentlemen, that he feared he should be drowned. This gentleman was Charles Maclean, who gave me an accompt of it. The event followed about a year thereafter, for the Laird of Coll was drowned in the water of Lochy, in Lochaber. I examined both Charles McLain and John Macdonald and found that the prediction was as he told me, and the said Macdonald could produce no other warrand than that he found the signes frequently before to foregoe the like events. This man, indeed, was known to have many visions of this kind, but he was none of the strickest life.

“The fifth instance is strange and yet of certain truth, and known to the whole inhabitants of the Island of Eigg, lying in the Latitude of fifty-six degrees and twenty minutes, Longitude 14 degrees. There was a tenent in this Island that was a native, follower of the Captain of Clan Raunold, that lived in a town called Kildounan, the year of God Eighty-



five, who told publicly to the whole inhabitants upon the Lord's Day, after divine service performed by Father O'Rain, then priest of that place, that they should all flitt out of that Isle and plant themselves somewhere else. Because that people of strange and different habits and arms were to come to the Isle and to use all acts of hostility, as killing, burning, tirling, and deforceing of women; finally to discharge all that the hands of an enemy could do. But what they were or whence they came he could not tell. At the first there was no regard had to his words, but frequently thereafter he begged of them to notice what he said, otherwise they should repent it when they could not help it, which took such an impression upon some of his near acquaintance as that several of them transported themselves and their families, even then, some to the Isle of Cannay, some to the Isle Room. Fourteen days before the enemy came thither, under the command of one Major Ferguson and Captain Pottinger, whilst there was no word of their coming, or any fear of them conceived. In the month of June, 1689, this man fell sick, and Father O'Rain came to see him in order to give him the benefit of Absolution and Extreame Unction, attended with several of the inhabitants of the Isle, who in the first place narrowly questioned him before his friends, and begged of him to recant his former folly and his vain prediction, to whom he answered that they should find very shortly the truth of what he had spoken, and so he died. And within fourteen or fifteen days thereafter I was eye-witness (being then prisoner with Captain Pottinger) to the truth of which he did foretell, and being beforehand well instructed of all that he saw I did admire to see it particularly verified,

especially that of the different habits and arms, some being clad with Red Coats, some with White Coats and Grenadier Capes, some armed with sword and Pike and some with Sword and Musket. Though I could give many more proofs as unquestionable as these, yet I think what is said is sufficient to prove the Being of such a thing as the same to hand."

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The rest of Frazer's little book is taken up with a discourse as to how this Second-Sight is formed, with the ideas of his day about species or images coming from off things, passing into the brain through the eye and ear, and there stored up in order in its compartments. He accounts for visions—sounds being seen and heard—on the principle of the phonograph, by some angel, good or bad, reversing the process and thus sending the "species" back to the retina of the eye from behind by the nerves. The solution is not a bad attempt, considering the state of scientific knowledge in Frazer's day. Where he finds the way too difficult towards an explanation, he devoutly refers the matter as due to the direct will of God, since he is satisfied that such visions were sent for our edification.

## CHAPTER VI.

### SOME INCIDENTS FROM THEOPHILUS INSULANUS.

In 1763, Messrs Ruddiman, Auld and Co., of Moroceo's Close, Lawnmarket, Edinburgh, published a small octavo volume for "Theophilus Insulanus," believed to be a Mr Macpherson, a minister of Skye, who travelled much in the Highlands and Islands during the latter part of the 18th century. His curious little work is entitled—"A Treatise on the Second Sight, Dreams, and Apparitions, with several instances sufficiently attested; and an appendix of others equally authentic. The whole illustrated with letters to and from the author on the subject of his treatise; and a short Dissertation on the Mischievous Effects of Loose Principles. By Theophilus Insulanus."

Theophilus appears to account for the gift on natural grounds, and in his little work he gives many instances of prophecies and visions which he believed to be genuine, as these were related to him by the seers and by eye-witnesses. In his "treatise" he deals in his own quaint way with the "undoubted fact" of the Second-Sight, which he attempts to explain by references to such appearances as the "Spectre of the Brocken," the "Fata Morgana," and the "Desert Mirage," and he is careful to point out that the seers are the possessors of "minds of a melancholy cast," and "in some instances they are weak-sighted."

The following are typical examples of the "instances" given by Theophilus, most of whose stories are, he says, given on the authority of the narrators—"persons of undoubted veracity who had no interest or design to falsify or disguise the truth of their narrations."

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### DONALD MACASKILL.

Donald Macaskill declared to Theophilus Insulanus that Marion Nighean Dhomnuil (Donald's daughter), then living in Scornadaine for twelve years before the event happened, saw a corpse overlaid with a black cloth carried up by half a dozen men in a narrow pass of a rock, which was afterwards verified by a woman having tumbled down a steep rock, where she had been gathering some herbs for the use of a sick person. Her neighbours having missed her, set out in search of her and found her dead on the shore. They with difficulty carried the corpse up the narrow pass, "according to the Seer's prediction and the testimony of eye-witnesses."

Note here that Theophilus says that the narrator, Marion, told him she had seen the vision twelve years before the event, but not that she published it then.

### DONALD MACKINNON.

Of the same class is that in which Donald Mackinnon, an "honest tenant" in Halistra, in Water-nish, relates that in the harvest of 1760, in the dusk of the evening, as he was binding and putting together the corn, on a sudden he saw a neighbour of his, followed by a throng of people carrying a corpse, go right through a field of standing corn belonging to himself. Naturally he was not pleased. However,

through fear that it might be a vision, he did not choose to challenge his neighbour." His wife and family held that the vision would soon be verified. He went out in the early morning, found the corn standing, and was satisfied that it was a vision. About a year after he saw his neighbour and a company with a corpse in reality coming through the same field from Greshernish, to bury it at the churchyard of Trumpan.

### CHRISTIAN MACASKILL.

This woman told him she often had the Second-Sight, but not with any satisfaction. Her first experience with it was, when on one occasion she sat by the fireside, she saw one Kenneth Macaskill, who lived at some distance from her house, taking a sheep belonging to herself and cutting its throat. She immediately rose and went to the man's house, forced the door open, and there and then found the man in the very act which she foresaw in the vision. She identified the sheep by "challenging her mark on it." The thief, finding he was caught, gave her three or four ells of new linen, which he said was price enough for her sheep, and then strongly recommended to keep the whole thing a secret.

### ANGUS CAMPBELL.

This man, a tacksman of Eansay, in Harris, saw a fleet of nine ships coming under sail to a place called Corminish, opposite to his house, where they dropped anchor. Both he and his family, including his servants, he avers, took particular notice of a large sloop among those ships. "As the place where they moored was not a **safe** harbour, he sent word to others



of his servants to come that they might send a boat to pilot these ships to a safer anchorage. On their coming up to him, and while deliberating what to do, the scene gradually disappeared." This may have been an optical delusion, but the remarkable thing is added that two years thereafter the same number of ships, including the remarkable sloop, came and dropt anchor at Corminish. The story is vouched by many living witnesses, he says, including the Rev. Mr Kenneth Macaulay, the minister of Harris.

### JOHN MACLEOD.

This man, a tacksman of Feorlig, saw the minister of Duirinish passing by. He inquired of the servant whether he observed anything remarkable about the minister. The man replied that he saw the figure of the minister dwindle away to the bigness of a boy of six or seven years of age and then recover his former size. The master as well as the servant observed this, and both concluded that this was a presage of death which was soon to happen. This, adds Theophilus, is commonly the sure forerunner of death. In this case it was certainly verified.

### THE LADY COLL.

This lady, who is described as one who had a pious education, and one who lived in the practice of untainted virtue told Theophilus that a gentleman, one Maclean of Knock, an elderly reputable gentleman, living on the Coll Estate, informed her that as he walked in the fields about sunset, he saw a neighbour who had been sick a long time coming his way with another man, and as they drew near he asked them some questions and how far they intended to go. The



first answered they were to travel forward to a village he named, and then pursued his journey with a more than ordinary pace. Next day, early in the morning, he was invited to his neighbour's funeral, which surprised him much, as he had seen and spoken to him much as he had seen and spoken to him the evening before; but he was told by the messenger that came to him that the deceased person had been confined to his bed for seven weeks and that he died a little before sunset, much about the time he saw him in vision the preceding day.

### LACHLAN MACCULLOCH.

In 1744, this man-servant to Alexander Macdonald of Gearry-Dhouil, in Benbecula, coming out of his master's house under night, before he had gone many steps saw at no great distance a "promiscuous heap of red-coats" and Highlandmen on the path that led to the house. The sight so frightened him that in the hurry to get home he struck his shin against a stone to the effusion of blood, and immediately, as soon as he entered, he told his fellow servants what he had seen. In 1746, Captain Ferguson, who commanded the "Furnace" sloop of war, at the head of a body of troops and Argyle militia, came to Gearry-Dhouil's house. This gave an opportunity to all that were in the family to see them really as Macculloch had seen them about two years before by the Second-Sight.

### DONALD MACLEOD.

This gentleman was one of the Macleods of Lewis, who claim descent from the Kings of Norway, who once ruled over the whole of the Hebrides and the Isle of Man. He told Theophilus that a certain young

girl was contracted to a gentleman in Lewis equal to her in birth and other circumstances. A Seer, who lived in the family, frequently told the young lady that she never would be married to that man. Even when the parson came to join their hands, the bride and bridegroom being completely dressed and ready waiting to fulfil the ceremony, the Seer persisted in what he had so often asserted. In the meantime the bride, having stepped out of the room after night fell, she was met by a gentleman at the head of twelve persons, who carried her to a boat hard by, and conducting her to an island at some distance from the mainland, waited there until they were married, and the Seer's prediction fulfilled.

## CHAPTER VII.

### AUBREY'S ACCOUNT.

In his interesting volume of *Miscellanies* "John Aubrey, Esqre., Fellow of the Royal Society at Gresham College, London," devotes one of his chapters to "An Account of Second-Sighted Men in Scotland." This Account, he says, is contained in "Two Letters from a Learned Friend of Mine in Scotland," and he adds—"This is the surest and clearest account of Second-Sighted men that I can now find, and I have set it down fully as if I were transiently telling in your own presence, being curious for nothing but the verity so far as I could." The "*Miscellanies*" were printed in London "for Edward Castle next Scotland Yard Gate by Whitehall, 1696." Aubrey was one of the earliest biographers of Shakespeare and, apart from his own standing and that of his correspondent, his Account is of particular interest as giving so "sure and clear" a statement of the facts as known in his day.

In the first letter given in the "Account," Aubrey's "Learned Friend in Scotland" writes:—

For your satisfaction I drew up some queries about the Second-Sight men, and having sent them to the northern parts of this kingdom some while ago I received answers to them from different hands, whereof I am now to give you an account, viz.—

Query 1.—If some few credible well-attested instances of such knowledge as is commonly called

the Second-Sight can be given? Answer—Many instances of such knowledge can be given by the confession of such who are skilled in that faculty. For instances I refer you to the fourth query.

Query 2.—If it consists in the discovery of present or of past events only? Or, if it extend to such as are to come? Answer—The Second-Sight relates only to things future which will shortly come to pass. Past events I learn nothing of.

Query 3.—If the objects of this knowledge be sad and dismal events only—such as deaths and murders? Or, joyful and prosperous also? Answer—Sad and dismal events are the objects of this knowledge, as sudden deaths, dismal accidents; that they are prosperous or joyful I cannot learn. Only one instance I have from a person worthy of credit, and thereby judge of this joyfulness or prosperity of it. And it is this—Near 40 years ago Mackleud and his Lady, sister to my Lord Seaforth, were walking about their own house, and in their return both came into the nurse's chamber, where their coming into the room the nurse falls a-weeping; they asked the cause, dreading the child was sick or that she was scarce of milk. The nurse replied the child was well, and she had abundance of milk; yet still she wept, and being pressed to tell what ailed her, she at last said—Mackleud would dye, and the Lady would shortly be married to another man. Being inquired how she knew that event, she told them plainly that as they came both into the room she saw a man with a scarlet cloak and a white hat betwixt them, giving the lady a kiss over the shoulder, and this was the cause of her weeping. All which came to pass after Mackleud's death. The Tutor of

Lovat marry'd the lady in the same habit the woman saw him. Now by this instance judge if it be prosperous to one, it is dismal to another.

Query 4.—If these events, which Second-Sighted men discover, or fore-tell, be visibly represented to them, and acted as it were, before their eyes?

Answer—Affirmatively, they see these things visibly, but none sees them but themselves; for instance, if a man's fatal end be hanging, they'll see a gibbet, or a rope about his neck; if beheaded, they'll see the man without a head; if drowned, they'll see water up to his throat; if unexpected death, they'll see a winding-sheet about his head; all which are represented to their view. One instance I had from a gentleman here, of a Highland gentleman of the Mackdonalds, who having a brother that came to visit him, saw him coming in wanting a head; yet told not his brother he saw any such thing; but within 24 hours thereafter his brother was taken (being a murderer) and his head cut off and sent to Edinburgh. Many such instances might be given.

Query 5.—If the Second-Sight be a thing that is troublesome and uneasie to those that have it? and such as they would gladly be rid of? Answer—It is commonly talked by all I spoke with that it is troublesome, and they would gladly be freed from it but cannot. Only I heard lately of a man very much troubled in his soul therewith, and by serious begging of God deliverance from it, at length lost the faculty of the Second-Sight.

Query 6.—If any person, or persons, truly godly, who may justly be presumed to be such, have been known to have this gift or faculty? Answer—Negatively, not any godly, but such as are vitious.

Query 7.—If it descends by succession from parents to children ? Or, if not, whether those that have it, can tell how they came by it ? Answer—That it is by succession. I cannot learn how they came by it, as hard to know, neither will they tell ; which if they did they are sure of their stroaks from an invisible hand. One instance I heard of one Allen Miller, being in company with some gentlemen, having gotten a little more than ordinary of that strong liquor they were drinking, began to tell stories and strange passages he had been at. But they said Allen was suddenly removed to the farther end of the house and was there almost strangled. Recovering a little and coming to the place where he was before, they asked him what it was that troubled him so ? He answered he durst not tell, for he had told too much already.

Query 8.—How came they by it ? Answer—Some say by compact with the Devil. Some say by converse with those demons we call Fairies. I have heard that those that have this faculty of the Second-Sight have offered to teach it to such as were curious to know it, upon such and such a condition they would teach them, but their proffers were rejected.

I cannot pass by an instance I have from a very honest man in the next parish, who told me it himself. That his wife, being big with child, near her delivery, he buys half a dozen boards to make her a bed 'gainst the time she lay in. The boards lying at the door of his house, there comes an old fisherwoman, yet alive, and asked him whose were those boards ? He told her they were his own. She asked again for what use he had them ? He replied, for a bed. She again said—Intend them for what use you please,



she saw a dead corpse lying on them, and that they would be a coffin; which struck the honest man to the heart, fearing the death of his wife. But when the old woman went off he calls presently for a carpenter to make the bed, which was accordingly done, but shortly after the honest man had a child died, whose coffin was made of the ends of those boards.

In continuing his letter Aubrey's correspondent says:—The original, whereof this that I have writ is a true copy, was sent by a minister living within some few miles of Inverness to a friend of mine whom I employed to get information for me, as I insinuate before. I have other answers to these queries from another hand, which I purposed to have communicated to you at this time, but I find there will not be room enough for them in this sheet; howbeit, in case you think it fit, they shall be sent you afterward.

In the meantime I shall tell you what I have had from one of the Masters of our College here (a North-countryman both by birth and education, in his younger years), who made a journey in the harvest time into the shire of Ross, and, at my desire, made some enquiry there concerning the Second-Sight. He reports that there they told him many instances of this knowledge which he had forgotten, except two. The first, one of his sisters, a young gentlewoman, staying with a friend at some 30 miles distance from her father's house, and the ordinary place of her residence. One who had the Second-Sight in the family where she was, saw a young man attending her as she went up and down the house, and this was about three months before her marriage. The second is of a woman in that country who is reputed to have the Second-Sight and declared, that eight days before

the death of a gentleman there she saw a bier or coffin covered with a cloth which she knew, carried as it were to the place of burial, and attended with a great company, one of which told her it was the corpse of such a person, naming that gentleman, who died eight days after. By these instances it appears that the objects of this knowledge are not sad and dismal events only, but joyful and prosperous ones also. He declares farther that he was informed there, if I mistake not, by some of those who had the Second-Sight, that if at any time when they see those strange sights they set their foot upon the foot of another who hath not the Second-Sight, that other will for that time see what they are seeing, as also that they offered, if he pleased, to communicate the Second-Sight to him.

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In his second letter Aubrey's "Learned Friend in Scotland" writes:—

Since my last to you, I have had the favour of two letters from you. To the first, dated February 6, I had replied sooner, but that I wanted leisure to transcribe some further accounts of a Second-Sighted man, sent me from the North, whereof (in obedience to your desire) I give the doubles.

May 4th, 1694.

A copy of an answer to some queries concerning Second-Sighted men, sent by a minister living near Inverness, to a friend of mine:—

Query 1.—That there is such an art, commonly called the Second-Sight, is certain, from the following instances:—

First—In a gentleman's house, one night the

mistress considering why such persons whom she expected, were so late and so long in coming, the supper being all the while delayed for them, a servant man about the house (finding the mistress anxious), having the Second-Sight, desires to cover the table, and before all things were put on, those persons she longed for would come in, which happened accordingly.

A second instance, concerning a young lady of great birth, whom a rich knight fancied and came in suit of the lady, but she could not endure to fancy him, being a harsh and unpleasant man. But her friends importuning her daily, she turned melancholy and lean, fasting and weeping continually. A common fellow about the house meeting her one day in the fields, asked her, saying—Mrs Kate, what is that that troubles you and makes you look so ill? She replied that the cause is known to many, for my friends would have me marry such a man by name, but I cannot fancy him. Nay (says the fellow) give over these niceties, for he will be your first husband, and will not live long, and be sure he will leave you a rich dowry, which will procure you a rich match, for I see a Lord upon each shoulder of you. All which came to pass in every circumstance, as eye and ear witnesses declare.

A third instance of a traveller coming into a certain house, desired some meat. The mistress being something nice and backward to give him victuals: You need not, says he, churle me in a piece of meat, for before an hour and a half be over, a young man of such a stature and garb will come in with a great salmon fish on his back, which I behold younder on the floor. And it came to pass within the said time.

A fourth instance, of a young woman in a certain house about supper time refused to take meat from the steward, who was offering in the very time meat to her. Being asked why she would not take it ? replied she saw him full of blood, and therefore was afraid to take anything off his hands. The next morning the said steward, offering to compose a difference between two men at an ale-house door, got a stroke of a sword on the forehead, and came home full of blood. This was told me by an eye-witness.

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Query 2.—Those that have this faculty of the Second-Sight see only things to come, which are to happen shortly thereafter, and sometimes foretell things which fall out three or four years after. For instance, one told his master that he saw an arrow in such a man through his body, and yet no blood came out, and if that came not to pass he would be deemed an impostor. But about 5 or 6 years after the man died and being brought to his burial-place, there arose a debate anent his grave, and it came to such a height that they drew arms and bended their bows, and one letting off an arrow shot through the dead body upon the bier-trees, and so no blood could issue out of a dead man's wound. Thus his sight could not inform him whether the arrow should be shot in him alive or dead, neither could he condescend whether near or far off.

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Query 3.—They foresee murthers, drownings, weddings, burials. combates, manslaughters, all of which many instances might be given. Lately (I believe in August last, 1695) one told there would be drowning in the River Bewly, which came to pass.

Two pretty men crossing a ford both drowned, which fell out within a month. Another instance, a man that served the Bishop of Catnes, who had 5 daughters in his house, one of them grudged that the burden of the family lay on her wholly. The fellow told her that ere long she should be exonerated of that task, for he saw a tall gentleman in black walking on the Bishop's right hand, whom she should marry. And this fell out accordingly within a quarter of a year thereafter. He told also of a covered table full of varieties of good fare, and their garbs who sat about the table.

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Query 4.—They see all this visibly acted before their eyes, sometimes within and sometimes without doors, as in a glass.

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Query 5.—It is a thing very troublesome to them that have it and would gladly be rid of it. For if the object be a thing that is terrible, they are seen to sweat and tremble and shreek at the apparition. At other times they laugh and tell the thing cheerfully, just according as the thing is pleasant or astonishing.

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Query 6.—Sure it is that the persons that have a sense of God and religion and may be presumed to be godly, are known to have this faculty. This evidently appears in that they are troubled for having it, judging it a sin, and that it came from the devil and not from God, earnestly desiring and wishing to be rid of it if possible, and to that effect have made application to their minister to pray to God for them, that they might be exonerated of that burthen. They have supplicated the Presbyterie, who judicially appointed publick prayers to be made in several



churches, a sermon preached to that purpose in their own Parish Church by their minister, and they have compeired before the pulpit after sermon making confession openly of that sin with deep sense on their knees, renounced any such gift or faculty which they had to God's dishonor and earnestly desired the minister to pray for them, and after this they were never troubled with such a sight any more.

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Aubrey's "Miscellanies" also contain "copy of a letter written to myself by a gentleman's son in Strathspey, being a student in Divinity, concerning the Second-Sight." In this letter several instances are given—"only those attested by several of good credit yet alive."

And first, Andrew Mackpherson of Clunie in Badenoch, being in sute of Laird of Gareloch's daughter, as he was upon a day going to Gareloch, the Lady Gareloch was going somewhere from her house within Kenning to the very road which Clunie was coming. The Lady perceiving him said to her attendants that yonder was Clunie going to see his mistress. One that had this Second-Sight in her company replied and said—"If yon be he, unless he marry within six months he'll never marry." The Lady asked how did he know that? He said very well; for I see him, saith he, all inclosed in his winding-sheet, except his nostrils and his mouth, which will also close up within six months. Which happened even as he foretold; within the said space he died, and his brother, Duncan Macpherson, this present Clunie, succeeded.

I have heard of a gentleman whose son had gone abroad, and being anxious to know how he was, he



went to consult one who had this faculty, who told him that that same day, 5 a-clock in the afternoon, his son had married a woman in France, with whom he had got so many thousand crowns, and within two years he should come home to see father and friends, leaving his wife with child of a daughter and a son of six months behind him. Which accordingly was true. About the same time two years he came home, and verified all that was foretold.

It is likewise ordinary with persons that lose anything to go to some of these men, by whom they are directed how, what persons, and in what place they shall find it. But all such as profess that skill are not equally dexterous in it. For instance, two of them were in Mr Hector Mackenzie, minister of Inverness, his father's house, the one a gentleman, the other a common fellow, and discoursing by the fireside, the fellow suddenly begins to weep, and cry out—Alas! alas! such a woman is either dead or presently expiring. The gentlewoman lived 5 or 6 miles from the house, and had been some days before in a fever. The gentleman being somewhat better expert in that faculty, said—No, saith he, she's not dead; nor will she dye of this disease. O, saith the fellow, do you not see her all covered with her winding-sheet? Ay, saith the gentleman, I see her as well as you do; but do you not see her linen all wet? which is her sweat, she being presently cooling of the fever. This story Mr Hector himself will testifie.

The most remarkable of this sort that I hear of now, is one Archibald Mackeanyers, alias Mackdonald, living in Ardinmurch, within 10 or 20 miles, or thereby, of Glencoe, and I was present myself, where he foretold something which accordingly fell out.

In 1683 this man, being in Strathspey, in John Macdonald of Glencoe, his company, told in Balachastell before the Laird of Grant, his lady, and several others, and also in my father's house, that Argyle, of whom few or none knew then where he was, at least there was no word of him then here, should within two twelve months thereafter come to the West Highlands and raise a rebellious faction, which would be divided among themselves, and disperse, and he, unfortunately, be taken and beheaded at Edinburgh, and his head set upon the Tolbooth, where his father's head was before him. Which proved as true, as he foretold it, in 1685 thereafter. Likewise in the beginning of May next after the late Revolution, as my Lord Dundee returned up Speyside after he had followed General Major Mackay in his rear down the length of Edinglassie, at the Milatown of Gartinbeg the Macleans joined him, and after he had received them he marched forward, but they remained behind and fell a-plundering. Upon which Glencoe and some others, among whom was this Archibald, being in my father's house and hearing that Macleans and others were pillaging some of his lands went to restrain them, and commanded them to march after the army. After he had cleared the first town, next my father's house of them, and was come to the second, there, standing on a hill, this Archibald said—Glencoe, if you take my advice, then make off with yourself with all possible haste, for ere an hour come and go you'll be put to it as hard as ever you was. Some of the company began to droll and say—What shall become of me? Whether Glencoe believed him or no I cannot tell; but this I am sure of, that whereas before he was of intention

to return to my father's house and stay all night, now he took leave and immediately parted. And, indeed, within an hour thereafter Mackay and his whole forces appeared at Culnakyle in Abernethie, two miles below the place where we parted, and hearing that Cleaverhouse had marched up the waterside a little before, but that Macleans and several stragglers had stayed behind, commanded Major Aeneas Mackay, with two troops of horse, after them, who, finding the said Macleans at Kinchardie, in the parish of Duthel, chased them up the Morshaith. In which chase Glencoe happened to be and was hard put to it, as was foretold.

There was one James Mack-Coil-vic-alaster, alias Grant, in Glenbeum, near Kirkmichael in Strathawin, who had this sight, who I hear of several that were well acquainted with, was a very honest man and of right blameless conversation. He used ordinarily by looking to the fire, to foretell what strangers would come to his house the next day or shortly thereafter, by their habit and arms and sometimes by their names; and if any of his goods or "cattel" were missing he would direct his servants to the very place where to find them, whether in a mire or upon dry ground; he would also tell if the beast were already dead or if it would die ere they could come to it, and in winter if they were thick about the fireside, he would desire them to make room to some others that stood by, though they did not see them, else some of them would be quickly thrown into the midst of it. But whether this man saw any more than "Brownie" and "Meig Mallach" I am not very sure. Some say he saw more continually, and would often be very angry-like.

They generally term this Second-Sight in Irish—

"Taishitaranghk," and such as have it "Taishatrin Taish," which is properly a shadowy substance. So that "Taishtar" is as much as one that converses with ghosts or spirits, as they commonly call them the Fairies or Fairy-Folk. Others call these men "Phissichin," from "Phis," which is properly Foresight or Fore-knowledge.

Sir William Dugdale did inform me that Major-General Middleton (since Lord) went into the Highlands of Scotland to endeavour to make a party for King Charles the First. An old gentleman (that was second-sighted) came and told him that his endeavour was good, but that he would be unsuccessful, and moreover that they would put the King to death, and that several other attempts would be made, but all in vain. But that his son would come in, but not to reign, but at last would be restored. This Lord Middleton had a great friendship with the Laird Bacconi, and they made an agreement that the first of them that died should appear to the other in extremity. The Lord Middleton was taken prisoner at Worcester fight and was prisoner in the Tower of London under three locks. Lying in his bed pensive Bacconi appeared to him. My Lord Middleton then asked him if he were dead or alive? He said dead, and that he was a ghost, and told him that within three days he should escape, and he did so in his "wive's cloaths." When he had done his message he gave a frisk and said—"Givenni, Givanni, 'tis very strange in the world to see so sudden a change," and then gathered up and vanished. This account Sir William Dugdale had from the Bishop of Edenborough. And this and the former account he hath writ in a Book of Miscellanies, which I have seen, now in Oxford.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### PEPYS' CORRESPONDENCE ON THE SECOND-SIGHT.

The following letters relating to the Second-Sight from Lord Reay to Mr Pepys, the famous diarist, have a distinct value on account of the high social position of both the correspondents. In Wood's Peerage we have it stated that "George, third Lord Reay, of Durness, in Scotland, F.R.S., was a nobleman of parts and learning." He died in 1748. The Lord Tarbut referred to in this first letter is spoken of in the Peerage of Scotland, printed for J. Alman, 1767, as Sir George Mackenzie, eldest son of Sir John, created a Baronet by Charles I. He was a man of great learning and well versed in the laws. He held a commission from Charles II., then in exile, to raise what forces he could, in order to promote his restoration; and for those good services, when Charles returned to England, he was made a Senator of the College of Justice, Clerk Register, one of the Privy Council, and Justice-General. By James II. he was created Viscount Tarbut in 1685. In the reign of Queen Anne he was made Secretary of State, Privy Councillor, and created Earl of Cromartie in 1702. He died in 1714. His grandson, George, third Earl of Cromartie, having taken an active part in the Rebellion of 1745, was found guilty of high treason, and his estates and his title were forfeited to the Crown, but he was pardoned and permitted to reside in England. He died in 1766.



Mr Pepys was the Secretary to the Admiralty during the Civil Wars. His diary, which commences January 1st, 1659-60, was regularly kept for ten years, and is of great historical value. The correspondence is quite as interesting as the diary and is well worthy of perusal.

The six letters on the Second-Sight are partly from Lord Reay to Mr Pepys, enclosing one from Lord Tarbut to Mr Boyle, the famous chemist, and partly from a Dr Hicks, with Mr Pepys's replies to his correspondents.

“The Lord Reay to Mr Pepys.

Durness, the 24th Oct., 1699.

“Honoured Sir,—Conforming to my promise, I send you all the information I have met with in the inquiry you recommended to me touching the Double-Sight, and have just now received my Lord Tarbut's answer to me relating thereto, as follows:—

“I remember that several years ago in answer to a letter of Mr Boyle I wrote to him about the Second-Sight; a copy whereof received enclosed. Since that time I was not much in the north, nor did I either make any inquiries on that purpose, or what I occasionally heard then differ considerably from what I had heard formally. One particular of which was of a footman of your great-grandfather's, who was mightily concerned upon seeing a dagger in the Lord Reay's breast. He informed his master of the sight, who laughed at it. Some months after he gave the doublet which he did wear when the Seer did see the dagger in his breast, to his servant, who did wear or keep it about a year, and then gave it to this footman, who was the Seer, and who was stabbed in the breast



by another when this doublet was upon him. My lord, you may inquire further into the truth of this.

“This, sir, is the answer I have had from my Lord Tarbut, and I enclose you a copy of his letter therein. I have since informed myself of the truth of the story about my grandfather's footman, and find it literally true; as also another, much of the same nature, which I shall give you an account of, because I have it from a sure author, a friend of my own, of unexceptionable honesty, to whose father the thing happened, and he himself was witness to it all. John Mackay, of Didril, having put on a new suit of clothes, was told by a Seer that he did see the gallows upon his coat, which he never noticed; but some time after gave his coat to his servant, William Forbes, to whose honesty there could be nothing said at the time, but he was shortly after hanged for theft, with the same coat about him, my informer being an eye-witness of his execution and one who had heard what the Seer said before.

“I have heard several other stories, but shall trouble you with no more than what happened since I last came into the country. There was a servant woman in Mindo Aubry's house, in Langdale on Strathnaver, in the shire of Sutherland, who told her mistress that she saw the gallows about her brother's neck, who had then the repute of an honest man; at which her mistress being offended, put her out of the house. Her brother, nevertheless, having stolen some goods, was sentenced to be hanged the 22nd August, 1698; yet by the intercession of several gentlemen, who became bail for his future behaviour, was set free (though not customary by our law) which occasioned one of the gentlemen, Lieutenant Alex. Mackay, to tell the woman servant that she was once

deceived, the man being set at liberty, she replied, he is not dead yet, but shall certainly be hanged, and accordingly he, betaking himself to stealing anew and being caught, was hanged the 14th Feb., 1699. I was this year hunting in my forest, having several Highlanders with me; and speaking of the Second-Sight, one told me there was a boy in company who had it, and had told many things that had fallen out to be true, who being called and confessing it I asked him what he saw last; he told me that he had seen the night before such a man by name, who lived 30 miles from that place, break my forester's servant's head, which the servant overhearing laughed at him for saying that that could not be, they being very good friends, so as I did not believe it, but it certainly happened since. These stories, with what is considered in my Lord Tarbut's letter, are the most satisfactory for proving Second-Sight I have heard, and the people are so persuaded of the truth of it in the Highlands and Isles, that one would be more laughed at for not believing it there than for affirming it elsewhere.

“For my own part I do not question it; though that be of small weight towards the persuading others to the belief of it. But I dare affirm had you the same reasons I have, you would be of my opinion. I mean had you heard all the stories I have, attested by men of honour not to be doubted, and been eye-witness in some of them yourself; as the breaking of a man's head, foretelling of another's death, and **another story** which the same boy told me long ere they happened. There was a blind woman in this country in my time who saw them perfectly well, and foretold several things that happened as hundreds of men will attest. She was not born blind, but became so by accident,

to that degree that she did not see so much as a glimmering, yet saw the Second-Sight as perfectly as before. I have got a manuscript since I came last to Scotland, whose author, though a parson, does (after giving a very full account of the Second-Sight) defend there being no sin in it for reasons too long to be here inserted, but with the first opportunity I shall send you a copy of his books, and I have this day received a letter from a friend I had employed for that purpose, promising me the acquaintance of this man, of which I am very covetous, being persuaded it will give me much light in this matter.

“There is a people in these countries surnamed ‘Mansone,’ who see this sight naturally, both men and women, though they commonly deny it, but are so affirmed to do by all their neighbours. A Seer with whom I was reasoning on this subject finding me very incredulous in what he asserted, offered to let me see as well as himself. I asked whether he could free me from seeing them thereafter, whereto he answering me he could not, put a stop to my curiosity. The manner of showing them to another is thus: the Seer puts both his hands and feet above yours, and mutters some words to himself, which done, you both see alike. This, sir, is all the information I can send you on this head till I have the opportunity of sending you the fore-mentioned Treatise.—Remaining, honoured sir, your most obedient servant,—REAY.

The Lord Tarbut on the same subject to Mr Boyle.

Sir,—I had heard very much, but believed very little, of the Second-Sight; yet it being affirmed by several of great veracity, I was induced to make some

inquiry after it in the year 1652, being then confined to abide in the North of Scotland by the English usurpers. The more general accounts of it were that many Highlanders, yet far more Islanders, were qualified with this sight; that men, women, and children, indistinctively, were subjected to it; and sometimes age, who had it not when young, nor could any tell by what means produced. It is a trouble to most of those who are subject to it. The sight is of no long duration, only continuing so long as they keep their eyes steadily without trembling; they hardly, therefore, fix their look that they may see the longer, but the timorous see only glances, their eyes always trembling at the first sight of the object. That which is generally seen by them is the species of living creatures, and inanimate things, which are in motion, such as ships, and habits upon persons; they never see the species of any person who is already dead. What they foresee, fails not to exist in the mode and place where it appears to them. They cannot tell what space of time shall intervene betwixt the apparition, and real existence; but some of the hardiest and longest experience have some rules for conjectures, as, if they see a man with a shrouding-sheet in the apparition, they would conjecture at the nearness and remoteness of his death by the more or less of his body that is covered with it. They will ordinarily see their absent friends, though at a great distance, sometimes no less than from America to Scotland, sitting, standing, or walking, in some certain place, and then they conclude with assurance that they will see them so and there. If a man be in love with a woman, they will ordinarily see the species of that man standing by her; and so, likewise, if a woman

be in love They conjecture at their marrying, by the species looking on the person; at their not marrying by the species appearing at a distance from the beloved person. If they see the species of any person who is sick to death, they see them covered over with a shrouding sheet. These generally I had verified to me by such of them as did see, and were esteemed honest and sober by all the neighbourhood, for I inquired after such for my information; and because there were more Seers in the Isles of Lewis, Harris, and Uist, than any other place, I did entreat Sir James Macdonald (who is now dead), Sir Normande Macleod, and Mr Daniel Morrison, a very honest parson (who is still alive), to make inquiry into this strange sight, and to acquaint me therewith; which they did, and found an agreement in these generals, and informed me of many instances confirming what they said.

I was once travelling in the Highlands, and a good number of servants with me, as is usual there, and one of them going a little before me to enter a house where I was to stay all night, and going hastily to the door, he suddenly started back with a screech, and fell by a stone, against which he dashed his foot. I asked what the matter was, for he seemed to be very much frightened; he told me very seriously that I should not lodge in that house, because shortly a dead coffin would be carried out of it, for many were carrying it, he was heard cry. I, neglecting his words, and staying, he said to others of the servants he was very sorry for it, and that what he saw would surely come to pass; and though no sick person was then there, yet the landlord, a healthy Highlander, died of an apoplectic fit before I left the house. In the year 1653, Alexander Munro (afterwards Lieutenant-Colonel to



the Earl of Dumbarton's regiment) and I was walking in a place called ——— (a blank space in the M.S.), in Loch Broom, in a little plain at the foot of a rugged hill; there was a servant working with a spade in the walk before us, his back to us, and his face to the hill. He took no notice of us, though we passed by near to him, which made me look at him, and perceiving that he stared I conjectured he was a Seer; wherefore I called to him, at which he started and smiled. "What are you doing?" said I; he answered, "I have seen a very strange thing—an army of Englishmen, leading of horses, coming down that hill; and a number of them are come down to the plain, and eating the barley which is growing in the field near to the hill." This was the 4th of May (for I noted the day), and it was four or five days before the barley was sown in the field he spoke of. Alexander Munro asked him how he knew they were Englishmen; he answered "Because they were leading horses, and had hats and boots, which he knew no Scotchman would have on there." We took little notice of the whole story as other than a foolish vision, but wished that an English party were there, we being at war with them, and the place almost inaccessible for horsemen. But the beginning of August thereafter, the Earl of Middleton, then Lieutenant for the King in the Highlands, having occasion to march a party of his towards the South Islands, sent his foot through a place called Inverlaewell, and the forepart, which was first down the hill, did fall to eating the barley which was on the little plain under it, and Munro, calling to mind what the Seer told us in May preceding, wrote of it, and sent an express to me to Lochslime in Ross (where I then was) with it. I had occasion to be in company



where a young lady was (excuse my not naming of persons), and I was told there was a notable Seer in company, and I called to him to speak with me, and after he had answered several questions, I asked him if he saw any person to be in love with that lady. He said he did, but knew not the person, for during the two days he had been in her company, he perceived one standing near her with his head leaning on her shoulder, which he said did foretell that the man should marry her, and die before her, according to his observation. This was in the year 1655. I desired him to describe the person, which he did; so I could conjecture by the description that it was such a one who was of that lady's acquaintance, though there was no thought of their intermarriage till two years later; and having occasion in the year 1657 to find this Seer, who was an Islander, in company with the other person whom I conjectured to have been described by him, I called him aside, and asked him if that was the person he saw beside the lady near two years then past. He said it was he indeed, for he had seen that lady just then standing by him hand-in-hand. This was some few months before their marriage, and the man is since dead, and the lady is still alive. I shall trouble you with but one more, which I thought the most remarkable of all that occurred to me. In Jan., 1682, the above named Colonel Munro and I happened to be in the house of William Macleod, of Fierinshed, in the county of Ross; he, the landlord, and I sitting on three chairs near the fire, and in the corner of the great chimney there were two Islanders, who were that very night come to the house, and were related to the landlord. While one of them was talking with Munro, I perceived the other to look oddly towards me, and

from his looks, and his being an Islander, I conjectured that he was a Seer, and asked him why he stared? He answered by desiring me to rise from the chair, for it was an unlucky one. I asked "Why?" He answered, "Because there was a dead man in the chair next to it." "Well," said I, "If it be but in the next, I may safely sit here; but what is the likeness of the man?" He said he was a tall man with a long grey coat, booted, and one of his legs hanging over the chair, and his head hanging down to the other side, and his arm backward as if it were broken. There were some English troops quartered near the place, and there being at that time a great frost after a thaw, the country was wholly covered with ice. Four or five Englishmen riding by this house, not two hours after the vision, where we were sitting by the fire, we heard a great noise, which proved to be these troopers, with the help of other servants, carrying in one of their number who got a very mischievous fall, and his arm broken; and falling frequently into swooning fits, they brought him into the hall, and set him in the very chair and in the very posture which the Seer had proposed; but the man did not die, though he revived with great difficulty.

Among the accounts given me by Sir Normande Macleod, there was one worthy of special notice, which was this. There was a gentleman in the Island of Harris who was always seen by the Seers with an arrow in his thigh; such in the isle who thought these prognostications infallible did not doubt but he would be shot in the thigh before he died. Sir Normande told me that he heard it in the subject of discourse for many years, when that gentleman was present; at last he died without any such accident. Sir Normande

was at his burial in St Clement's Church, in the Isle of Harris. At the same time the corpse of another gentleman was brought to be buried in the very same church. The friends on either side came to debate who should first enter the church, and in a trice from words they came to blows. One of the number (who was armed with a bow and arrow) let fly among them. (Now, every family in that isle have their burying place in that church in stone chests, and the bodies are carried on open biers to the place of burial.) Sir Normande having appeased the tumult, one of the arrows was found shot in the dead man's thigh; to this Sir Normande himself was a witness. In the account Mr Daniel Morrison, parson in the Lewes, gave me, there was one, which, though it be heterogeneous from this subject, yet it may be worth your notice. It was of a young woman in this parish who was mightily frightened by seeing her own image still before her, always when she came into the open air, and the back of the image always to her, so that it was not a reflection as in a mirror, but the species of such a body as her own, and in a very like habit, which appeared to herself continually before her. The parson bred her a long time with him, but she had no remedy for her evil, which troubled her exceedingly. I was told afterwards, that when she was four or five years older, she saw it not. These are matters of fact, which I assure you are truly related; but these, and all others that occurred to me by information or otherwise, could never lead me into so much as a remote conjecture of the cause of so extraordinary a phenomenon; whether it be a quality in the eyes of some persons, in those parts, concurring with a quality in the air also; whether such species be everywhere, though not seen

for want of eyes so qualified, or from whatever cause, I must leave to the inquiry of clearer judgments than my own. But a hint may be taken from this image which appeared still to this young woman aforementioned, and from another mentioned by Aristotle, in the 4th of his *Metaphysics*, if I remember right, for it is so long since I read it; as also from the common opinion that young infants (unsoiled with many objects) do see apparitions which are not seen by those of older years; likewise from this, that several who did see the Second-Sight when in the Highlands or Isles, yet when transported to live in other countries, especially in America, quite lose this quality; as it was told me by a gentleman who knew some of them in Barbadoes, that did not see any visions there, although he knew them to be Seers when they lived in the Isles of Scotland.

Mr Pepys to Lord Reay.

York Buildings, Nov. 21, 1669.

My Lord,—I can never enough acknowledge the honour of your lordship's letter. Could I have foreseen the least part of the fatigue my inquiries have cost your Lordship in the answering I should have proceeded with more tenderness in the burthening you with them. But since your Lordship has had the goodness to undergo it, I cannot repent me of being the occasion of your giving the world so early a proof of what may be further expected from a genius so curious, so painful (painstaking), so discerning, and every way philosophical, as your Lordship has herein shown yours to be, in the exercise whereof I cannot (as an old man) but wish you a long life and a happy

one, to the honour of your whole family, your country, the whole commonwealth of learning, and more particularly that part of it (the Royal Society of England) dedicated to the advancement of natural knowledge, whereto your Lordship is already become a peculiar ornament. And now, my Lord, for the matter of your letter: it carries too much observation and weight in it to be too easily spoken to; and therefore I shall pray your Lordship's bearing with me if I ask a little more time. This only I shall not spare now to say, that, as to the Second-Sight, I little expected to have been ever brought so near to a conviction of the reality of it, as by your Lordship's and Lord Tarbut's authorities I must already own myself to be; not that I yet know how to subscribe my Lord Tarbut's charging it upon some singularity of quality in the air, or eye of the person affected therewith; for as much as I have never heard of other consequences of any indisposure in the medium or organ of sight, than what related to the miscolouring, misfiguring, or undue magnifying of an object truly existing and exposed thereto; whereas in this case we are entertained with daggers, shrouds, arrows, gibbets, and God knows what, that indeed are not, but must be the creatures of the mind only (however directed to them) and not to the eye. Nor yet as to the reality of the effect would I be thought, my Lord, to derive this propension of mine to the belief of it from the credit only which I find it to have obtained among your neighbours, the Highlanders, for that it hath been my particular fortune to have outlived the belief of another point of faith relating to the eyes, no less extraordinary nor of less universal reception elsewhere—I mean the *mal de ojo* in Spain;



with a third, touching the sanative and prophetic faculty of the Saluadores there: as, having heretofore pursued my inquiries therein so far, upon the place, as to fully convince myself of the vanity thereof, especially of the latter from the very confessions of its professors. But, my Lord, where (as in the matter before us) the power pretended as is so far from being of any advantage to the possessors, as on the contrary to be attended with constant uneasiness to them, as well as for the most part of evil and serious import (and irresistible so) to the persons it is applied to, in consequence whereof (as your Lordship will note) your Seers are both desirous to be themselves rid of it, and ready to communicate it to any other that will venture on it; I say the considerations, joined to that of its being so abundantly attested by eye-witnesses of unquestionable faith, authority, and capacity to judge, will not permit me to distrust the truth of it, at least till something shall arise from my deliberations upon your Lordship's paper leading me thereto, than I must acknowledge there yet does; in which case I shall give myself the liberty of resorting again to your Lordship, praying in the meantime to know how far I have your leave to make some of my learned friends partakers with me in the pleasure of them, and of what your Lordship has been pleased, with so much generosity, to promise me of further light upon this subject from the Manuscript lately come to your Lordship's hand, a copy of which will be a most welcome and lasting obligation upon me.

I remain with most profound respect,

Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

S. PEPYS.



The Lord Reay to Mr Pepys.

Inverness, Jan. 9th, 1700.

Sir,—I had yours some time ago, but delayed my return, in expectation of sending you the Manuscript I promised you, which, being obliged to stay some time from home, you are not yet to expect from me. You may, if you think fit, communicate my late letter to whom you please; for there is nothing in it but what I know to be true, or have good authors for; and think it needless, though I have heard many, to relate more stories of Second-Sight, save one which has happened since I wrote last.

A gentleman who was married to a cousin of Drynie's, living at his house, called him to the door (the very ordinary compliments being passed) to speak to him about some business. But when he went out he was so frightened that he fainted, and being recovered would not stay in the house that night, but went with to a farmer's near by; where she asking him why he left the house, he told her publicly that he knew Drynie would die that night; for when he went to the door, he saw his winding sheet about him. And accordingly the gentleman did die that night, though he went to bed in perfect health, and had no sickness for some time before. I had this story from Drynie's own son, the farmer, his servant, and the man himself saw it. For my part I am fully convinced of this sight; but what to attribute it to I know not, nor can I be convinced, any more than you, that it depends on any quality, either of the air or eyes, but would gladly know your opinion of it. I hope to see you shortly in London, and am, sir,

Your very humble servant,

REAY.

Dr Hickes to Mr Pepys.

London, June 19th, 1700.

Honoured Sir,—I have been ill of a cold since I had the honour to wait upon you and Mr Hewer, and that hath been the cause why I have been so long in performing the promise I made, of sending you in writing some things you gave me occasion to say, by imparting to me my Lord Reay's letter to you, and the letter my Lord Tarbut wrote to him concerning the Second-Sight. This is a very proper term for that sight which those Scottish Seers or visionists have of things by representation; for, as the sight of a thing itself is, in order of nature, the first or primary sight of it; so the sight of it, by any representation, whether really made without, as all apparitions are, or within upon the stage of imagination, as all sorts of visions are made, is in order of nature the second or secondary sight of that thing; and therefore, the sight of any thing by representation, though first in order of time, may properly be called the Second-Sight thereof. Thus the sight of a picture in order of nature, is indeed the second sight of the thing whose picture it is, and if custom would allow it, might be so called. But the Scotch have restrained the use of the term only to that sight of things by appearance, or representation, which those Seers or Visionists among them used to have; but whether in outward apparitions always, or inward visions, or some times one way, and some the other, I have not yet learned, but it would be an inquiry proper for the subject, and fit for that ingenious Lord to make. I told you, when I was in Scotland, I never met with any learned man, either among their divines or lawyers, who doubted the

thing. I had the honour to hear Lord Tarbut tell the story of the Second-Sight of my Lord Middleton's march with his army down a hill, which you read in the letter written by his Lordship to Mr Boyle. It was before the Duke of Lauderdale he told it, when his Grace was High Commissioner of Scotland, about twenty-two years ago. About the same time, as I remember, he entertained the Duke with a story of elf arrows, which was very surprising to me; they were of triangular form, somewhat like the beard or pile of our old English arrows of war, almost as thin as one of our old groats, made of flints or pebbles, or such like stones, and these the country people of Scotland believe that evil spirits (which they call elves, from the old Danish word *Alfar*, which signifies Daemon, Genius, or such) do shoot into the hearts of the cattle; and, as I remember, my Lord Tarbut, or some other Lord, did produce one of these elf arrows, which one of his tenants or neighbours took out of the heart of one of his cattle that died of an unusual death.

I have another strange story, but very well attested, of an elf arrow that was shot at a venerable Irish Bishop, by an evil spirit, in a terrible noise louder than thunder, which shook the house where the Bishop was; but this I reserve for his son to tell you, who is one of the deprived Irish clergymen, and very well known, as by other excellent pieces, so by this late book, entitled "*The Snake in the Grass*." I mention this to encourage you to desire my Lord to send you a more perfect account of these elf arrows; the subject being of so near alliance to that of the Second-Sight, and to witchcraft, which is akin to them both. As for this subject, I had a very tragical but

authentic story told me by the Duke of Lauderdale, which happened in the family of Sir John Dalrymple, Laird of Stairs, and then Lord President, as they call the Lord Chief Justice of Scotland. His Grace had no sooner told it me, but my Lord President coming into the room, he desired my Lord to tell it me himself, which, altering his countenance, he did with a very melancholick air; but it is so long since, that I dare not trust my memory with relating the particulars of it, though it was a memorable story; but if my Lord Reay would be pleased to make inquiry into it for the present heir of the family, he would find it a story of great authority, and worthy of being written by his excellent pen.

Sir, I beg your pardon for this digression from Second-Sight to witches; and perhaps the divine whom my Lord Reay tells you hath written a book in defence of the innocency of seeing things by the help of it, would be offended with me for joining them together. In truth, sir, I long to see that book, being myself uncertain in my opinion whether that way of seeing things be from a good or evil cause, or some times from one, and sometimes from the other. One would hope that in good men, who contribute nothing towards the having of it, it should be from good spirits, which the old Danes and Norwegians, from whom the Scotch have a great part of their language, called *Lias Alfar*, i.e., Spirits of Light; but in those who come to have it by certain forms of words, which we call charms, or doing and performing such ceremonies as are mentioned in my Lord's letter, one would think it proceeded from evil spirits, which the old Danes and Norwegians called *Stuart Alfar*, i.e., Black Spirits. It may also be presumed to proceed

from the same cause, in men of otherwise unblamed lives, who are addicted to study magic, or judicial astrology, or who are known to converse with demons, as many amongst the learned, both ancient and modern, both foreigners and our own countrymen, are said to have done. A good number of well-attested stories out of good historians and records, as well as living witnesses, would help to resolve these doubts. Among the former are to be consulted the histories of old Northern nations, written in old Danish or Swedish, which commonly have the title of Saga, which signifies a narration or history, and have been printed of late in Denmark and Sweden. But it may be these theories, and many more are sufficiently resolved and accounted for in the book above mentioned, which my Lord hath promised to send you; but as by phenomena, they may be resolved.

It was commonly reported, when I was in Scotland, that Lord Seaforth, then living, had the Second-Sight, and thereby foretold a dreadful storm to some of his friends, in which they had like to have been castaway. Once I heard the Duke of Lauderdale rally him about it, but he neither owned it nor disowned it; according to that maxim of the civil law, "*Qui tacet aut non negat, sic utique non fatetur.*"

At the same time there were a girl in custody in Edinburgh, whose name was Janet Douglas, about 12 or 13 years of age, famous for the Second-Sight, and discovery of witches and their malices and enchantments thereby. This girl first signalised herself in the Western Islands, where she discovered how one Sir G. Maxwell was tormented in effigy by witches. She was not known there where she made this, which was her first discovery, but from thence she came to



Glasgow, whither her fame having got before her, the people in great numbers ran out to meet her. As she was surrounded by crowds, she called out to one man, a goldsmith, as I remember, and told him that of so long a time he had not thriven in his trade, though he was very diligent in it, because an image was made against him, which he might find in such a corner of his shop; and when the man went home, there he found it where she said it was, and the image was such both as to matter and form as she had described it, viz., a little rude image made of clay. She told another that he and his wife, who had been a very loving couple, of late had lived in great discord, to the grief and astonishment of them both; and when the man asked the reason, she answered as she did before, that there was an image against them. I have forgot whether she named the witches who made these images, as she did those who made that in which they tortured Sir George Maxwell. But by these and other such discoveries, she made such tumults and commotions among the people of Glasgow, that the Magistrates thought fit to confine her, and send an account of her to the Privy Council at Edinburgh, who send for her up in custody; but when she came near the city the people went out in vast crowds to meet her, and as she was surrounded by them, she accused several people of witchcraft, which obliged them to put her in close confinement, to keep the people and their minds quiet from the commotions she had raised in them. This happened a little before the Duke of Lauderdale went the last time as High Commissioner into Scotland in May, 1678, when I had the honour to attend him as his domestic chaplain.

One thing I must not fail to tell you—that in all



her marches from Sir George Maxwell's to Edinburgh nobody knew her nor would she discover to any one who she was. . . . After I returned from Glasgow I renewed my petition to my Lord Duke for leave to see Janet Douglas, which he granted me. My desire of seeing her arose from a great curiosity I had to ask her some questions about the Second-Sight, by which she pretended to make all her discoveries. I took a reverend and learned divine with me, one Mr Scott, minister of the Church of the Abbey of Holyrood, now the Palace of the Scottish Kings. When we were first brought to her, I found her as I had heard her described, a girl of very great assurance, undaunted, though surprised at our coming, and suspicious that I was sent to betray her; this made her very shy of conversing with us, but after many and serious protestations on my own part, that I came for no other end but to ask her some questions about the Second-Sight to which she pretended, she at least promised she would freely answer me, provided I would use my interest with my Lord High Commissioner to obtain her liberty upon condition she went into England, never again to appear in Scotland, which I promised to do. Upon this I began to premise something of the baseness of lying and deceiving, and especially of pretending to false revelations and the dangerous consequences of such practices, which made all such lying pretenders odious to God and man, and thus requiring her in the presence of God to tell me nothing but truth, she promised me with a serious air to tell me nothing but the very truth. I then asked her if indeed she had the Second-Sight, and if by that she knew those things she discovered, to which she replied in the affirmative. I then asked her if

she thought it proceeded from a good or evil cause, upon which she turned the question upon me and asked me what I thought of it. I told her plainly I feared it was from an evil cause, but she replied quickly, she hoped it was from good. I then asked her if it came upon her by any act of her own, as by saying any words or performing any actions or ceremonies, to which she replied No. I asked her upon this, if she remembered her baptismal vow, but she did not understand my question till I began to explain it, and then with great quickness replied she remembered it and called to mind that she had renounced the devil and all his works; and then I told her that by the devil was meant Satan, the Prince of Devils and all spirits under him, and asked her if she renounced them all; which she said she did. Then I asked her if she would renounce them all in form of words that I had provided; which promising to do, I bid her say after me, which she did in the most serious and emphatic expressions that I was able to devise. Then I asked her if she could say the Lord's Prayer, she said yes; I bid her say it upon her knees, which she did. Then I asked her if she had ever prayed to God to deliver her from the power of the devil and all evil spirits; but not answering readily and clearly to that question, I then asked her if she would make such a prayer to God on her knees as I would compose for her, which she did without any difficulty. Then I proceeded to ask her at what distance she saw persons and things by the Second-Sight, she replied, at the same distance as they were really from her, whether more or less. Then I asked her if the Second-Sight came upon her sleeping or waking; she answered, never sleeping, but

always when she was awake. I asked this question to know whether the Second-Sight was by outward representation, which I call apparition, or by inward representation on the theatre of imagination caused by some spirit; or, that I may use my own terms for distinction, whether these Second-Sight folks were Seers or Visionists, or sometimes one and sometimes the other. Then I asked her if she was wont to have any trouble, disorder, or consternation of mind, before or after the Second-Sight came upon her, to which she answered never, but was in the same temper at those as at all other times. Then I asked her if the Second-Sight never left any weariness or faintness upon her, or listlessness to speak, walk, or do any other business, to which she answered no, adding that she was always then as before. These two answers of hers do not agree with some of my Lord's Letters, wherein, as I remember, he speaks of one who said he had always perturbation of mind attending the Second-Sight; but as to this there may be a difference, from the different temper of the patients, and the different stock and temper of the animal spirits in them. This girl, as I have observed before, was of a bold, undaunted spirit, and might bear those sights, from what cause soever, without any fear or perturbation, which others of more passive tempers, and a less stock of animal spirits could not so well endure. There seems to have been this difference among prophets themselves, whereof some, as we read, received the prophetic influx with great terrors, labour, and consternation, of which they complained when their visions of apparitions were over, and desired of God to be excused from the prophetic influx and burthen of it; but of others, we do not read

they had any such complaints. One of the last questions I asked this girl was: if she desired the Second-Sight to be taken from her; to which she replied, what God pleased. After I had discoursed with her in this manner, as long as I thought convenient, I returned home, and gave the Duke an account of my conversation, with which he was pleased; and I told him of my promise to intercede with his Grace for her liberty, upon condition she might go into England, but he said that would not be convenient for certain reasons. After receiving which answer, I sent her word that I could not obtain her liberty, and so she was shut up all the while we were there, but soon after we came away she was set at liberty. When I heard of it I made all inquiry I could what was become of her, and how she came to obtain her liberty; but I could not get any further account of her, which made me suspect that she was the child of some person of honour or quality, for whose sake all things were hushed. When I was with her I asked her of her parentage, but she would tell me nothing of it. I also told her how I observed that all her words and expressions were of the better sort, and asked her how, she, being a Highlander and in appearance a poor girl, came to speak so well. To this she artfully replied why I should suppose it so difficult for her to learn to express herself well. Indeed, her wit and cunning were both answerable to her assurance. The famous Lord Advocate, Sir George Mackenzie, of immortal memory, designed to write her history; but why he did not, I can give no account, etc.—(Signed) GEO. HICKES.

Henry, 2nd Earl of Clarendon, to Mr Pepys.

London, May 27th, 1701.

Sir,—I cannot give you a greater instance of my willingness to gratify your curiosity in anything within my certain knowledge than the sending you this foolish letter. The story I told you the other day relating to what they call in Scotland the Second-Sight, is of so old a date and so many of the circumstances out of my memory that I must begin as old women do their tales to children, "Once upon a time."

The matter was thus:—One day, I know by some remarkable circumstances it was towards the middle of February, 1661-2, the old Earl of Newborough came to dine with my father at Worcester House, and another Scotch gentleman with him, whose name I cannot call to mind. After dinner, as we were standing and talking together in the room, says my Lord Newborough to the other Scotch gentleman (who was looking very steadfastly upon my wife), "What is the matter, that thou hast had thine eyes fixed upon my Lady Cornbury ever since she came into the room? Is she not a fine woman? Why doest thou not speak?" "She's a handsome lady indeed" (says the gentleman) "but I see her in blood." Whereupon my Lord Newborough laughed at him, and all the company going out of the room, we parted, and I believe none of us thought more of the matter. I am sure I did not. My wife was at that time perfectly well in health and looked as well as ever she did in her life. In the beginning of the next month she fell ill of the small-pox. She was always very apprehensive of that disease, and used to say if she



ever had it she should dye of it. Upon the ninth day after the small pox appeared the blood burst out again with great violence at her nose and mouth, and about eleven of the clock that night she dyed almost weltering in her blood.

This is the best account I can now give of this matter, which tho' I regarded not at the time the words were spoken, yet upon reflection afterwards, I could not but think it odd, if not wonderful, that a man only looking upon a woman, whom he had never seen before, should give such a prognostic. The great grief I was then in, and going quickly after out of town, prevented my being so inquisitive as I should have after the person of this Scotch gentleman, and other things. You will not wonder that after so long a distance of time, I cannot give a more particular account of a thing that seemed so very extraordinary. But I have kept you too long upon so imperfect a subect, and will conclude with assuring you that I am, with great esteem, sir, your most affectionate and humble servant,

CLARENDON.

## CHAPTER IX.

### BOSWELL AND JOHNSON'S ACCOUNTS.

There are several references to the Second-Sight in Boswell's "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D." The Tour was undertaken in 1773, "Dr Johnson," says Boswell, having "for many years given me hopes that we should go together and visit the Hebrides. Martin's account of those islands had impressed us with a notion that we might there contemplate a system of life totally different from what we had been accustomed to see; and to find simplicity and wildness, and all the circumstances of remote time and place, so near to our native great island, was an object within the reach of reasonable curiosity." In perusing Johnson's opinions on anything relating to Scotland, one must not overlook Boswell's own admission that Johnson's "prejudice against Scotland was announced almost as soon as he began to appear in the world of letters. . . . The truth is, like the ancient Greeks and Romans, he allowed himself to look upon all nations but his own as barbarians." In his inquiries, for instance, in search of proofs of the inauthenticity of Ossian's poems, as General Macleod, one of Johnson's hosts, remarks in his Memoirs, "it became very soon evident that he wished not to find them genuine." In regard to the Second-Sight, however, it is interesting to note that Macleod incidentally refers to

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Johnson's attitude on the question. Dr Johnson, he says, "listened to all the fables of that nature which abound in the Highlands; and though no one fact was so well vouched as to command its particular belief, he held that the thing was not impossible; and that the number of facts alleged formed a favourable presumption."

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Under date Tuesday, Sept. 7, 1773, when Johnson and Boswell were at Corrichatachin, in the Broadford district of Skye, Boswell writes—Johnson "inquired here, if there were any remains of the Second-Sight. Mr Macpherson, minister of Slate, said, he was resolved not to believe it, because it was founded on no principle. Johnson—'There are many things then, which we are sure are true, that you will not believe. What principle is there, why a loadstone attracts iron? why an egg produces a chicken by heat? why a tree grows upwards, when the natural tendency of all things is downwards? Sir, it depends upon the degree of evidence that you have.' Young Mr Mackinnon mentioned one Mackenzie, who is still alive, who had often fainted in his presence, and when he recovered, mentioned visions which had been presented to him. He told Mr Mackinnon, that at such a place he should meet a funeral, and that such and such people would be the bearers, naming four; and three weeks afterwards he saw what Mackenzie had predicted. The naming the very spot in a country where a funeral comes a long way, and the very people as bearers, when there are so many out of whom a choice may be made, seems extraordinary. We should have sent for Mackenzie, had we not been informed that he could speak no English. Besides, the facts

were not related with sufficient accuracy. Mrs Mackinnon, who is a daughter of old Kingsburgh (a Macdonald), told us that her father was one day riding in Skye, and some women, who were at work in a field on the side of the road, said to him, they had heard two 'taischs' (that is, two voices of persons about to die), and what was remarkable, one of them was an 'English taisch,' which they never heard before. When he returned, he at that very place met two funerals, and one of them was that of a woman who had come from the mainland, and could speak only English. This, she remarked, made a great impression upon her father."

Saturday, Sept. 16—at Ulva—"Macquarrie told us a strong instance of the Second-Sight. He had gone to Edinburgh, and taken a man-servant along with him. An old woman, who was in the house, said one day, 'Macquarrie will be at home to-morrow, and will bring two gentlemen with him'; and she said she saw his servant return in red and green. He did come home next day. He had two gentlemen with him, and his servant had a new red and green livery, which Macquarrie had bought for him at Edinburgh, upon a sudden thought, not having the least intention when he left home to put his servant in livery; so that the old woman could not have heard any previous mention of it. This, he assured us, was a true story."

Under date October 16, Johnson and Boswell having returned to Edinburgh, the latter writes:—"I beg leave now to say something upon Second-Sight, of which I have related two instances, as they impressed my mind at the time. I own, I returned

from the Hebrides with a considerable degree of faith in the many stories of that kind which I heard with a too easy acquiescence, without any close examination of the evidence; but, since that time, my belief in those stories has been much weakened, by reflecting on the careless inaccuracy of narrative in common matters, from which we may certainly conclude that there may be the same in what is more extraordinary. It is but just, however, to add, that the belief in Second-Sight is not peculiar to the Highlands and Isles. . . . However difficult it may be for men who believe in preternatural communications, in modern times, to satisfy those who are of a different opinion, they may easily refute the doctrine of their opponents, who impute a belief in Second-Sight to superstition. To entertain a visionary notion that one sees a distant or future event may be called superstition; but the correspondence of the fact or event with such an impression on the fancy, though certainly very wonderful, if proved, has no more connection with superstition than magnetism or electricity."

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### DR JOHNSON'S ACCOUNT.

In "A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland," Dr Johnson's own account of his and Boswell's tour to the Hebrides in the autumn of 1773, there is the following reference to the Second-Sight:—

We should have had little claim to the praise of curiosity, if we had not endeavoured with particular attention to examine the question of the Second-Sight. Of an opinion received for centuries by a whole



nation, and supposed to be confirmed through its whole descent, by a series of successive facts, it is desirable that the truth should be established, or the fallacy detected.

The Second-Sight is an impression made either by the mind upon the eye, or by the eye upon the mind, by which things distant or future are perceived, and seen as if they were present. A man on a journey far from home falls from his horse; another, who is perhaps at work about the house sees him bleeding on the ground, commonly with a landscape of the place where the accident befalls him. Another Seer, driving home his cattle, or wandering in idleness, or musing in the sunshine, is suddenly surprised by the appearance of a bridal ceremony, or funeral procession, and counts the mourners or attendants, of whom, if he knows them, he relates the names, if he knows them not, he can describe the dresses. Things distant are seen at the instant when they happen. Of things future I know not that there is any rule for determining the time between the sight and the event.

This receptive faculty, for power it cannot be called, is neither voluntary nor constant. The appearances have no dependence upon choice: they cannot be summoned, detained, or recalled. The impression is sudden and the effect often painful.

By the term Second-Sight, seems to be meant a mode of seeing, superadded to that which nature generally bestows. In the Earse it is called Taisch; which signifies likewise a spectre, or a vision. I know not, nor is it likely that the Highlanders ever examined whether by Taisch, used for Second-Sight, they mean the power of seeing, or the thing seen.

I do not find it to be true, as it is reported, that

to the Second-Sight nothing is presented but phantoms of evil. Good seems to have the same proportion in those visionary scenes, as it obtains in real life: almost all remarkable events have evil for their basis; and are either miseries incurred, or miseries escaped. Our sense is so much stronger of what we suffer, than of what we enjoy, that the ideas of pain predominate in almost every mind. What is recollection but a revival of vexations, or history but a record of wars, treasons, and calamities? Death, which is considered as the greatest evil, happens to all. The greatest good, be it what it will, is the lot but of a part.

That they should often see death is to be expected; because death is an event frequent and important. But they see likewise more pleasing incidents. A gentleman told me, that when he had once gone far from his own island, one of his labouring servants predicted his return, and described the livery of his attendant, which he had never worn at home; and which had been, without any previous design, occasionally given him. Our desire of information was keen, and our inquiry frequent. Mr Boswell's frankness and gaiety made everybody communicative; and we heard many tales of these airy shows, with more or less evidence and distinctness.

It is the common talk of the Lowland Scots, that the notion of the Second-Sight is wearing away with other superstitions; and that its reality is no longer supposed, but by the grossest people. How far its prevalence ever extended, or what ground it has lost, I know not. The islanders of all degrees, whether of rank or understanding, universally admit it, except the ministers, who universally deny it, and are suspected to deny it, in consequence of a system,

against conviction. One of them honestly told me, that he came to Skye with a resolution not to believe it.

Strong reasons for incredulity will readily occur. This faculty of seeing things out of sight is local, and commonly useless. It is a breach of the common order of things, without any visible reason or perceptible benefit. It is ascribed only to a people very little enlightened; and among them, for the most part, to the mean and ignorant.

To the confidence of these objections it may be replied, that by presuming to determine what is fit, and what is beneficial, they presuppose more knowledge of the universal system than man has attained; and therefore depend upon principles too complicated and extensive for our comprehension; and that there can be no security in the consequence, when the premises are not understood; that the Second-Sight is only wonderful because it is rare, for, considered in itself, it involves no more difficulty than dreams, or perhaps than the regular exercise of the cogitative faculty; that a general opinion of communicative impulses, or visionary representations, has prevailed in all ages and all nations; that particular instances have been given, with such evidence as neither Bacon nor Bayle has been able to resist; that sudden impressions, which the event has verified, have been felt by more than own or publish them; that the Second-Sight of the Hebrides implies only the local frequency of a power which is nowhere totally unknown; and that where we are unable to decide by antecedent reason, we must be content to yield to the force of testimony.

By pretension to Second-Sight, no profit was ever sought or gained. It is an involuntary affection,

in which neither hope nor fear are known to have any part. Those who profess to feel it do not boast of it as a privilege, nor are considered by others as advantageously distinguished. They have no temptation to feign; and their hearers have no motive to encourage the imposture.

To talk with any of these Seers is not easy. There is one living in Skye, with whom we would have gladly conversed; but he was very gross and ignorant, and knew no English. The proportion in these countries of the poor to the rich is such, that if we suppose the quality to be accidental, it can very rarely happen to a man of education; and yet on such men it has sometimes fallen. There is now a Second-Sighted gentleman in the Highlands, who complains of the terrors to which he is exposed.

The foresight of the Seers is not always prescience: they are impressed with images, of which the event only shews them the meaning. They tell what they have seen to others, who are at that time not more knowing than themselves, but may become at last very adequate witnesses, by comparing the narrative with its verification.

To collect sufficient testimonies for the satisfaction of the public, or of ourselves, would have required more time than we could bestow. There is, against it, the seeming analogy of things, confusedly seen, and little understood; and for it, the indistinct cry of national persuasion, which may be perhaps resolved at last into prejudice and tradition. I never could advance my curiosity to conviction; but came away at last only willing to believe.

## CHAPTER X.

### A REMARKABLE INSTANCE OF SECOND-SIGHT.

“The following interesting narrative from ‘Blackwood’s Magazine’ for September, 1818, was communicated to us,” writes the Editor, “by a gentleman (to whom we are under various obligations) who says in his private letter:— ‘Were I permitted to bring it forward, supported by all the evidences who could speak to its truth, it could be established as the best authenticated of any of those instances which have been given of the Seer’s prophetic sight. But delicacy forbids me to corroborate its truth by names, many connexions of the personages to whom the story relates being yet alive, who must still cherish a painful recollection of the fatal catastrophe.’”

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It is now, I believe, about eighty years ago since a festive party of ladies were assembled in the great hall of the baronial Castle of ———, which is grandly situated in an unfrequented part of the country, in the northern extremity of the kingdom. It had then been for some time the scene of Highland hospitality and joy, for Sir Charles and Lady D——, two young lovers lately made happy in the possession of each other, had come from the neighbourhood of the Scottish border, to spend some delightful weeks as the guests of Lord R——, the brother, or uncle of the lady, for I forget in which of these degrees of relationship that nobleman stood towards her. The



evening had closed, and the shrill sound of the bagpipe had already died away around the outer walls of the Castle, having told to the clansmen that the feast was begun. Mirth held his jocund reign, and joyous smiles played on every youthful countenance that brightened the circle of the huge oaken table, whilst the heaped-up faggots crackled in the ample grate, shooting a cheerful glare amidst the group. Care and anxiety were alike banished, excepting from the thoughts of the lovely Lady D——, who, though she could not but participate in the general gladness her presence had created, yet felt even the temporary absence of all she now held dearest on earth. Sir Charles had accompanied Lord R—— on the preceding day, to visit the distant mansion of a neighbouring chieftain, for the limits of neighbourhood are extended farther in regions where everything seems to participate in the greatness of the scale on which nature is herself displayed. Although the other females were well aware of the numerous chances which the warmth of Highland kindness afforded to prevent the departure of a guest on the appointed day, yet the restless emotions which Lady D—— felt were excited in her own bosom by her husband's absence; she guessed, and guessed rightly, that no temptation, however powerful, could operate to delay his return, when its object was to regain the enjoyment of her society. She therefore continued still to expect him, after every one else had abandoned all expectation of his appearance. She started at every sound, and glanced her fine eyes hastily to the door at every footstep, nor could the assurances of her companions persuade her to dismiss her hopes or convince her that it was not now at all probable that the gentlemen

would arrive that night, late as it then was; but that it was more likely they had been prevailed on to remain, to participate in some hunting expedition for the amusement of the Southern stranger.

There sat another personage at that festive board, on whom mirth seemed to have little effect; its beams, which shot in every direction from the eyes of the young and gay around her, fell on her high and marble features and raven eye, like those of the sun on the dark cavern of some cheerless and sea-beaten crag, engulfing, rather than reflecting, its light. This was the Lady Assynt, who, to do honour to Sir Charles and his young bride, had been invited to the Castle. But little had she added to the general mirth, for ever since her arrival, she had sat in the midst of hilarity, like the lonely cormorant on its rock, unmoved and regardless of the playful waves that murmured around her. Few attempts were made to bring her into the play of conversation, and even those few were soon silenced by chilling monosyllabic replies, delivered in a lofty and repulsive manner. She had been therefore left undisturbed to the full possession of her own gloomy thoughts. At last her very presence seemed to be almost forgotten, or if observed at all, she was noticed with no other interest than were the stiff and smoke-discoloured portraits of family ancestry, that stared in sullen and silent majesty from the deep carved panels of the ancient apartment where the party was seated.

The good-humoured jest, and the merry tale went round, and the laugh of youthful joy was at its highest, when a piercing shriek produced a sudden and death-like silence, and directed every head towards the Lady Assynt, who seemed for a moment

to be violently convulsed. The effect of such an unlooked-for interruption to the general gaiety may be easily conceived. The ladies arose in confusion, every assistance was proffered, and numerous inquiries were made. But seeming to endeavour by a desperate effort to summon up resolution to overcome this sudden nervous malady which apparently affected her, she put back both the kind and the curious with a wave of her hand, and haughtily resumed her usual dignified and freezing deportment, without deigning to give any explanation.

It was some time before the company was restored to its composure, and hilarity had hardly begun again to enliven it when a louder and yet more unearthly shriek again roused their alarm, and raised them from their seats in the utmost consternation. The Lady Assynt now presented a spectacle that chilled every one. The same convulsion seemed to have recurred with redoubled violence. She started up in its paroxysm, and her uncommonly tall figure was raised to its full height, and set rigidly against the high back of the Gothic chair in which she had been seated, as if from anxiety to retreat as far as its confined space would allow, from some horrible spectacle that appalled her. Her arms were thrown up in a line with her person; each particular bony finger was widely separated from its fellow, and her stretched eyeballs were fixed in glassy and motionless unconsciousness. She seemed for a time to lose all sense of existence, and though in an upright posture, to have been suddenly struck into a stiffened corpse. By degrees she began to writhe, as if enduring extreme agony; her livid lips moved rapidly, without the utterance of sound, until finally overcome by her

sufferings she sank within the depth of the antique chair, and remained for some minutes in a languid and abstracted reverie. The mingled anxiety and curiosity of the company was unbounded; numerous and loud were the inquiries, and of the inquirers Lady D——, who seemed instinctively to apprehend something dreadful connected with her own fate, was the most earnestly solicitous of all. The Lady Assynt heeded not the swarm of interrogatories which buzzed around her. She looked at first as if she heard them not; then raising herself solemnly and somewhat austere from the reclining position into which she had dropped, she spread her hands before her, and sweeping them slowly backwards to right and left, she divided the ring of females who surrounded her, and brought Lady D—— full within the range of her vision. At first she started involuntarily at sight of her, but melancholy and pity mingling themselves amidst the sternness of features to which such tender emotions seemed to have been long strangers, in a deep and articulate voice, and with a solemn and sibylline air, she slowly addressed Lady D——, whilst profound silence sat upon every other lip. "Let the voice of gladness yield to that of mourning! Cruel is the blow that hangs over thee, poor innocent dove! and sad is it for me to tell thee what thou art but too anxious to know. A vision crossed my sight, and I saw a little boat in which were thy lord and Lord R——; it was tossed by a sudden and tempestuous gust, that swept the dark surface of the loch in a whitening line. I saw the waves dashing over the frail bark, and sorely did the two Highlanders who rowed them contend with their oars against the outrageous whirlwind. I hoped, yet shuddered, from

fear of the event. Again the spirit of vision opened my unwilling eyes, and compelled me to behold that last wave, which 'whelmed them beneath the burst of the tremendous swell. The land was near. Stoutly the drowning wretches struggled with their fate. I saw Lord R—— and his sturdy servants, one by one, reach the shore, but——” “My husband!” shrieked Lady D—— in anguish, as she grasped the arm of the Seer, “Oh, tell me that my husband was saved!” “His body,” replied Lady Assynt, in a lower and more melancholy voice; “his body was driven by the merciless waves upon the yellow beach; the moonbeam fell upon his face, but the spark of life was quenched.”

Lady D——’s death-like grasp was relaxed and she swooned away in the arms of those who surrounded her. The Lady Assynt regarded her not; somewhat of her former convulsion again came upon her, and starting up in a frenzied manner she exclaimed, in a piercing voice, scarcely distinguishable from a scream: “And now they bear him hither! See how pale and cold he looks, how his long hair drips, how ghastly are his unclosed eyes, how blanched those lips where lately sat the warm smile of love!” Then sinking again, after a short interval, she continued in a more subdued tone, “He is gone for ever! No more shall he revisit his own fair halls and fertile fields. Yet is not all hope lost with him; for his son shall live after him, and bring back anew the image of his father.”

The ladies were now busied about Lady D——, who lay in a deep faint. All seemed to be much interested in her, as if the events described in the waking visions of the Lady Assynt had already



actually happened. Yet every one affected to treat her words as the idle dreams of a distempered brain; although in the very looks of the different speakers there was a fear betrayed that ill accorded with their words, manifesting the general apprehension that something tragical was to be dreaded. At last a confused noise seemed to arise from the under apartments of the Castle; mutterings, and broken sentences, and half-suppressed exclamations were heard on the great stairs and in the passages. The name of Sir Charles was frequently repeated by different voices. The more anxious of the party tried to gain information by running to the windows. The flaring lights of torches were seen to hurry across the courtyard, where all seemed to be bustle and dismay. And then it was that the doleful sound of the bagpipe, playing a sad and wailing lament, came upon the ear from without the castle gate. A slow, heavy and measured tramp of many feet upon the draw-bridge told that a party of men were bearing some heavy weight across it. Unable longer to submit to the suspense in which they were held, the greater part of the females now rushed from the hall. A cry of horror was heard, and the mysterious anticipations of the gifted Lady Assynt were found to be too dreadfully realised.

Lord R——, in the deepest affliction, told the sad tale with all its circumstances.

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There was no suspicion of Lady D——'s pregnancy at the time, but such proved to be the case; and, according to the prediction, the child was a son, who lived, the sole hope of an old and respectable family.

(Signed) T. L. D.

## CHAPTER XI.

### SOME MODERN INSTANCES.

There are not a few still living in the Scottish Highlands—in this year of grace, 1908—who are known to possess the gift of Second-Sight, though not to the same extent as some of those Seers to whom reference is made by the earlier writers on the subject. The “things seen” do not now take the precise forms that, according to such accounts as Aubrey’s and Theophilus Insulanus’, appear to have been common in their day. For instance, the vision of a person in a winding sheet that covers the body, more or less according to the nearness or remoteness of death—where death happens to be the event disclosed to the Seer—is not now, so far as can be ascertained, seen by any of the moderns who are known to possess the gift. What they “see” nowadays are “spectre funerals” or the “spectre” of an individual, or, sometimes, it may be that they “hear” sounds, more particularly the rattling of boards or the stroke of a hammer in a carpenter’s shop—carpenters’ work-shops in Highland hamlets being situated as a rule in proximity to the public roadways. In all these instances of spectres or sounds there is but one message to the Seer—death. The Second-Sight, where its possession is claimed to-day, has thus no other future event than death to disclose. There are the many guessings of future happenings that some pretend to be able to divine by this or that means, such as crystal-gazing, looking into a tea-cup, tingling ears,

itching nose or hands, and such like, which concern themselves with events that may be gay or sad, but these things are not to be confounded with the Second-Sight. It is always some phantom that the Second-Sighters "see" and, as already noted, the phantoms—as now seen—betoken but the one sad event. Phantom funerals, for instance, are no uncommon sight to many Highlanders of the present day. The incredulous may smile, but the testimony of so many trustworthy persons who have actually seen the "spectre" cannot be dismissed as either lying or hallucination. Those who have seen spectre funerals generally make their strange experience known to their acquaintances immediately after they have accosted the silent procession, and it is matter of common knowledge that in every such case the prediction is sooner or later followed by the death or funeral of some person within the circle of the acquaintances. Sometimes there is the "sight" of the particular person who is being carried to burial, or of the actual location of the grave in the burying-ground, or the particular persons carrying the remains. These correspond in every detail with the actual occurrence afterwards—the person "seen" dies, a burial takes place in the actual spot indicated, or the funeral is attended by the particular persons as previously seen in phantom by the Seer. Instances might be multiplied.

Mr Maclellan, who, in 1906, published a third edition of his collected Wonderful Sayings of the Petty Seer (Rev. John Morrison) records two typical cases. One refers to a farmer who lived in the parish of Avoch, in Ross-shire, who was personally known to Mr Maclellan, and who frequently told some

person, some time before the event took place, that this or that person in the neighbourhood would soon die. "He knew this by the fact that he saw the phantom funeral processions pass along the road at the east side of his farm to the graveyard so distinctly that he could easily recognise, and often told the names of, the persons forming them."

A young woman belonging to Brora, in Sutherlandshire, having had occasion to go from Brora to Lothbeg Manse one evening, observed a funeral procession going along the road ahead of her. Overtaking it she spoke to some of the men in the rear of the cortege whom she recognised. She asked whose funeral it was, but no one answered her. She followed them into the churchyard, situated near Lothbeg Manse, and distinctly heard the men speaking among themselves. Standing not far from the grave she saw the coffin lowered into it and the earth filled in, the funeral party vanishing out of sight the moment the interment was completed, from which she knew that she had seen a phantom funeral. She left the churchyard in a state of collapse, and was for some weeks afterwards confined to bed. She told her experience to friends, and a few days afterwards there came a funeral cortege to the churchyard, attended by the very people mentioned by the woman, the grave being dug and the coffin placed in it at the exact spot where she saw the spectre burial taking place.

A third instance, related by Mr Maclellan, refers to an uncle of his own, one Kenneth Bain, farmer in Avoch parish, "an elder in the Independent Chapel of Avoch," who, one evening in the year 1829, on going to the door of his house was greatly surprised

to see his son coming towards it riding a horse. "The father at once stepped forward to meet and welcome his son; but whenever he saluted him both he and his horse vanished out of sight. 'Och! och! wae's me!' groaned the aged saint; 'is it my son's spectre I have seen?' Kenneth Bain described the horse his son rode and the clothes he wore very minutely. Exactly a week afterwards the son arrived at his father's house. He rode the same kind of horse and wore the same clothes as seen by his father in the phantom arrival the previous week. The son, who had been previously in his usual health, was now ill, and died shortly afterwards."

A friend of the present writer's, one still living in Dingwall, was one day walking with a companion, a young man, also still living, along the main road from Strathpeffer Spa to Dingwall. When nearing Dingwall the companion suddenly touched his friend's arm and bade him stand aside "to allow the funeral to pass." His friend, alarmed, stood aside as bidden, but said he saw nothing. "Oh, yes," said the other, "there's a funeral just gone past, but now I understand it is a spectre one"—and he trembled as he spoke. "I don't care to speak about it," he continued, "but you will find that a funeral will pass along here to-morrow to Fodderty Church-yard" (which lies midway between Dingwall and Strathpeffer), and a funeral actually passed along the road next day at the same hour.

An old lady, living in Dingwall till recently, has frequently seen what she would describe as the spectre of persons known to her, and after the vision she would invariably tell her intimates that such and



such a person was to die. Once she stated that she had "seen" a particular person who was then known to be in America. Some weeks afterwards there came the news of that person's death, which had taken place (in America) on the day on which his "spectre" was seen in Dingwall. To those who knew this old lady it was decidedly uncanny to be anywhere in her vicinity, as one did not know at what moment she might have some unpleasant message to deliver. On one occasion she told a friend that she had seen a human eye coming out of a particular house and moving slowly along the public road in the evening in the direction of the church-yard, where it became lost to her "sight." In a day or two afterwards, no one knowing of illness in that particular case, there was a death in the house from which she saw the eye proceeding, and the burial took place in the church-yard indicated.

A crofter in the Parish of Lochbroom, who was living till a few years ago, was known to have repeatedly seen phantom funeral processions on their way to Lochbroom Church-yard, followed by the actual funerals on the following day or within a few days afterwards. This man was frequently known to tell beforehand the death of particular persons, and more frequently still to announce that funerals, attended by so and so, would take place on certain days, his knowledge being derived from his "second-sight" of the so-called phantom funerals.

Another friend of the writer's had a relative—an uncle, who was a crofter in the Newtonmore district of Inverness-shire, whose family had migrated thither from Kintail, who had the gift of Second-Sight in a remarkable degree. He seldom failed to "see" a

spectre funeral before the death of some one in his neighbourhood or of friends at a distance, and so frequently was he able to tell that so and so was about to die, or had died, that latterly his neighbours would keep out of his way if they saw him approaching, fearing that he might have something unwelcome to communicate. He was himself conscious that his "gift" was not an enviable possession, and during the closing years of his life he preferred not to say anything about any of the visions he had seen. That he continued to see visions to the end was well known, as he would often say to his nearer friends that he had seen the usual "spectre," but would decline to give further particulars. But one experience that befel himself was rather remarkable, though not rare among the Second-Sighted. He was on one occasion walking along the public roadway not far from his house, and was about to cross a bridge, when a spectre funeral met him. At the moment he involuntarily stepped aside to allow the cortege to pass, when he received a severe kick on the leg from a horse that happened to be ridden by one of the spectre funeral party in the rear of the procession. That he got the blow was unmistakeable; he felt the pain, and actually limped on his way home. On entering his cottage he told the household what had happened, but on examining his leg they could find no mark of any kind that would indicate a kick from a horse. The man persisted in his affirmations that he had been struck, and during the remainder of that night, and in bed, he complained of the severe pain in his leg. But next day he was up and about as usual, and, having occasion to pass along the same road and over the same bridge, he met a real funeral at the

same spot where the "spectre" cortege passed him on the day before. He saw that the funeral party was the same, and the same horse and its rider were there, when, suddenly, the horse shied as it passed him, kicking him severely on the leg in the exact spot where he had received the kick from the "spectre" horse. He limped home as on the previous day, and was there obliged to keep his bed for some time owing to the severity of the blow he received, but he assured his friends that the pain was no more severe than he felt after the kick from the "spectre" horse. These are facts and happenings that are vouched for beyond all possible doubt or dispute.

There are few people who are conversant with the older generation of Highlanders of the day who have not come across one or more who have seen such "sights" as these, or heard the noises in carpenters' shops that betoken death or a funeral. The facts are so well attested that they cannot be disputed; and among the Highlanders themselves they are accepted as a matter of course that admits neither of doubt nor of surprise.

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Occasionally—but this is very rare to-day—the Second-Sight takes the form of a direct divination, not exactly the foretelling of future events, as in the case of the Prophecies of the Petty Seer or the Brahan Seer, or those recorded in Dr Kennedy's "Days of the Fathers," but the "discovery of things secret or obscure," such as revealing the exact spot where anything that is lost may be found. Here, again, the incredulous may smile, and they may be pardoned for doing so in the absence of any satisfactory explanation of the "gift," but that the "gift" exists has

been proved again and again by well accredited instances.

Here are two instances of this particular gift narrated by Mr C. J. Macdonald, in the "Rowan Tree Annual," for 1907-8, published by Messrs Cowan and Co., Ltd. of Perth, as "true stories of the Second-Sight":—

Up among the Rannoch Hills in recent years, the writer knew of one with that gift who had long dwelt there. She was a simple, God-fearing, practical minded farmer's wife. Her married name was Cameron, but her maiden name was Rachel Macgregor. She was of the Macgregors of Ardlaroeh, a Rannoch branch of that notable clan, and inherited her gift, which had come down to her through generations—the curious point being that every red-haired daughter of this family had in her turn inherited the same gift in a very special way. Mrs Cameron's own daughter, also red-haired, has the same gift, and some years ago, discovered through its power the dead body of a man who had been drowned in the district.

It was the gloaming of an Aberfeldy market day. The sky was leaden and heavy with rain, the earth was slimy and sodden. The river Tay was tearing downwards in foaming and relentless spate, while the wind alternately moaned and shrieked through it all as if voicing an army of evil spirits.

The day's work was done, and among the last of the farmers to leave was one who was seen to wend his way homeward by the river-side, rendered treacherous and slippery with prolonged rains. As he went the darkness fell.

In his cosy farmhouse his wife watched and

waited, through the darkness and the dawn and the breaking day, but he never returned. Searchers went out to look for him. The river was dragged and re-dragged—three weeks had nearly passed, but all they found was a hat, a stick, and the smoothing down of grass and earth which is left when a heavy body has slid over it. One desire filled the hearts of his sorrowing family, namely that his body should receive Christian burial, and in their grief they bethought then of the farmer's wife in Rannoch and went to her for help.

She had never seen Aberfeldy, and knew nothing of the district or people, and for the moment she was helpless; but she said if light were given her she would let them know at once. A near relative of the writer being in the district about this time, and interested in the story, went himself to Mrs Cameron and heard what she "saw" from her own lips.

"I had just had my cup of tea one morning," she said, "and my mind being full of the sad story, I prayed that if it were His will, God would enable me to give some relief to these poor sufferers. Shortly after I saw——"

"Do you mean you were dreaming?"

"No; not this time! I was awake, and suddenly a sort of mist rose up, then cleared, and like a picture I saw a dead man lying in a reclining position, kept down by some tree roots at the bottom of a pool, at the side of a river, below a queer bridge. I did not know the place."

She sent at once for the relatives, and told them what she had seen. Hastily sketching the Aberfeldy bridge, one of them asked her if it was that bridge she saw. "That is the bridge," she said, "and the hole



below it is at the side" (naming it). "But we have dragged that in vain," they said, "over and over again." "I can't help it," she said, "the body is there now."

Hastening down, they once more took a boat, sharp-eyed boys with reflectors, and grappling irons. The boys said they saw something like a bundle of clothes at the foot. The irons were put down, and a boot was pulled up. The irons were again put down, and the body of the drowned man was brought up as Rachel Macgregor had "seen" it.

The story of the murdered Rannoch man, whose body was found in England through the medium of second-sight, is even more remarkable. A shooting tenant at Rannoch took a lad of the district back to England with him as a groom. Some time after news came that the lad had disappeared and could not be found. Again Mrs Cameron was appealed to for help. She had never been near England in her life.

But again she "saw," first that they had murdered and buried the young man among stones in a quarry near where he lived. But this was not all. Scarcely had she "seen" that, when she "saw" his murderers remove the body from the quarry and fling it into a lake. The searchers in England went to the quarry, discovered an empty hole, and stones all flung about; they then dragged the lake and found the body.

Mr Macdonald then goes on to say:—These are no legends. The incidents recorded actually occurred within recent years as many persons can testify. Of course many explanations have been given of second sight. Scientists have described those on whom this sixth sense has been bestowed as "spectre-haunted,"

subject to "spectre illusions" traceable to an abnormal state of the nervous system, exhaustion of mind or body, strong emotions and temperament. They further describe this faculty of "the two sights," or "second-sight" as that which enables people to see the ghosts of the dead revisiting the earth, and the apparitions of the living. The local view is that faith has a good deal to do with second sight, in fact, that it is the gift of God. The case is put in this way:—"Here was a God-fearing, Christian woman, healthy in mind and body, asking God, who had bestowed this gift upon her, for His own wise and inscrutable reasons, to sanctify it, and make it a blessing and comfort to others, and of her prayers being answered." The truth is we know nothing. Second-Sight remains a profound mystery.

## CHAPTER XII.

### PROPHECIES—DR KENNEDY'S INSTANCES.

In the pages that follow we give instances of "foretelling" events where the Second-Sight had no association with visions of "spectres" or any of the other things seen or heard which enabled the Seer to tell of future happenings. There are some who will not allow that this "gift of prophecy" as possessed by moderns is the same as the Second-Sight, on the ground that the Second-Sight is more directly a matter of "seeing visions," the distinctive gift of foretelling events, as in the Prophecies here given, being independent of visions, the Seer being able to divine directly from intuition or from "knowledge of the future event imparted by supernatural influence, which some give as the explanation of the gift as possessed by such men as the Rev. John Morrison, of Petty, and the Rev. John Kennedy, of Killearnan. But whatever the mode of operation, the "gift" works out practically the same in the case of "ghost-seers" and predictors alike. Both are able to foretell happenings.

There are many instances that might be recorded, all illustrative of the gift of "foretelling," which some in the Highlands are known to possess to the present day. But we confine the present work to those "prophecies" that have already appeared in print and which are known to many as the "Prophecies of the Brahan Seer," the "Wonderful Sayings of the Seer of Petty," and those remarkable—and more

modern—instances recorded in Dr Kennedy's "Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire," in the biographical sketch which he there gives of the "Minister of Killearnan"—his own father. The Kennedy instances have not been previously collected in this way, and to those who have not read them in their original setting—and to not a few who have probably perused them many times—their publication in this connection may come as a surprise where the reader has had any disposition to discredit the Second-Sight or the stories of "prediction" that are so frequently retailed at Highland Ceilidhs. At anyrate, here we have no less an authority than Dr Kennedy, the eminent minister of the Free Church in Dingwall, from 1844 to his death in 1884, who was known and admired as one of the most accomplished of men and most able of preachers in his day, giving the weight of his testimony to the genuineness of so many remarkable instances of comparatively modern predictions actually fulfilled.

We have already (Mr Morrison's Introduction, p. 7) given Dr Kennedy's own belief and opinion on the subject of this prophetic gift, and with that as an introduction to his own recorded instances we reproduce them here as introductory to those of the Petty Seer and the Brahan Seer, with which we close the present volume.

"The Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire," published in 1861, is one of the too few works that have come from the pen of Dr Kennedy, than whom not many could wield it to better purpose. The book deals with the religious life of the Highlands in the early years of Dr Kennedy's own life, prominence

being given to the sayings and doings of the ministers and "Men" who were conspicuous in those days for their personal piety and their outstanding gifts as preachers and teachers among the people. The "Men," to quote Dr Kennedy, "were so called, not because they were not women, but because they were not ministers." The term was used to distinguish the speakers at the old-time testimony meetings on the Fridays of Communion seasons in the Highlands, and as Dr Kennedy says—the easiest way of doing so was by saying "one of the ministers" or "one of the men said so." Of these Men and ministers Dr Kennedy has many remarkable anecdotes to relate. But here we confine ourselves to those given in the biographical sketch of the "Minister of Killearnan," Dr Kennedy's father, the Rev. John Kennedy, minister of Killearnan, who died January 10, 1841, in which some remarkable instances of Second-Sight, or the gift of foretelling, are recorded. And these are only a few of many more of the same nature that any chronicler of modern Highland life and manners could readily give. As Dr Kennedy himself notes, in his preface to the "Days of the Fathers"—"The field on which I gathered materials for this book would afford to a careful gleaner a rich collection of interesting matter. I had not time to pass leisurely over it; and even the scanty handful which I picked up in my haste I lacked the skill to arrange in a pleasing sample"—in reading which one does not know whether to admire more, Dr Kennedy's skill in the use of simple but dignified English, or his skill in expressing the modesty which was so characteristic of him.

In the early pages of "The Minister of Killearnan" there is an interesting account of the "Men" with



whom Mr Kennedy of Redcastle was intimate. One was Mr Mackay of Hope, of whom Dr Kennedy says that "he was a man eminent for godliness," and then Dr Kennedy continues—

The following anecdote, connected with his last days, is given on authority that may not be questioned. My father was to preach on a certain day, in a place not far from his house. Mr Mackay, though very ill, would allow none of the family or domestics to remain with him, insisting on all in the house going to hear the sermon. On their return, some one remarked to him that it was a precious sermon they had heard that day. "Well my soul knows that," he said, "for, though lying here, my mind was following the preacher's, as he was engaged in his work," and, to their utter astonishment, he mentioned the text and repeated much more of the sermon than could those who actually heard it. And then Dr Kennedy adds—This story, seemingly so incredible, is perfectly true, and furnishes a most remarkable instance of the mysterious fellowship of the saints.

There was one, "the godly Donald Macpherson, still alive when my father was in Eriboll," to quote Dr Kennedy, "of whom he has often said that of all the Christians he had ever known he was the man who lived nearest to the Lord. . . . He was, in some respects, more like a seer of the days of old than the ordinary Christian of the present time. His nearness to God in prayer was remarkable. Seldom did he carry one's case before the throne, without its being so laid open to him, that there was scarce a thought or feeling of the party prayed for hidden from him by the Lord. Remarkable instances of this might be multiplied."

“The well-known Robert Macleod”—one of the noted “Men” of the time—says Dr Kennedy, “was one of Donald Macpherson’s devoted disciples . . . few of whose fears and sorrows were hidden from him.” The story of Robert’s first prayer in Donald Macpherson’s family has often been told. Dr Kennedy thus relates it:—

To Robert’s bewilderment, his host abruptly asked him to pray at family worship, during a visit which he paid him. He dared not refuse; so, turning on his knees, and addressing his Creator, he said, “Thou knowest that though I have bent my knees to pray to Thee, I am much more under the fear of Donald Macpherson, than under the fear of Thyself.” Donald allowed him to proceed no farther, but, tapping him on the shoulder, said, “That will do, Robert; you have honestly begun and you will honourably end,” and then he himself concluded the service. Poor Robert’s first attempt was not, he himself thought, very encouraging, and he was expressing to his friend his fear that he never could be of any use, in bearing a public testimony for the truth. “Yes, Robert,” his friend soothingly said, “the Lord will open your mouth, to speak the praises of free grace, and, as a sign of this, you will be called thrice to speak, the very first day you are called to speak in public.” Soon thereafter, Robert heard that the communion was to be dispensed in Lochbroom, and that “Mr Lachlan” was expected to be there. He went on the appointed week, but did not reach the place of meeting at Lochbroom, till after the commencement of the service on Friday. He had not arrived when Mr Lachlan was opening the question, and yet, strange to say, the minister declared that he expected a recruit to the

ranks of the speakers that day, from whatever quarter he might come. Robert, just then, made his appearance, and was not long seated when he was called to "speak to the question." He did not refuse to rise, but was so embarrassed as to be able to utter only a few hurried words. Towards the close of the service, and after many others had spoken, Mr Lachlan called Robert again, and said to him, "as you were taken by surprise before, you could not be expected to say much, but rise again, and the liberty formerly denied will be given you." Robert rose, and delivered a most affecting address, which so delighted the minister, that he called him to conclude the service with prayer. This was Robert's first public appearance, and he was called thrice to speak; and thus the sign was given to him which Donald Macpherson had led him to expect.

A remarkable instance of Robert's warm love to the brethren, and of his nearness to God in prayer, has been often repeated, and is undoubtedly true. The case of the godly John Grant was pressed closely on his spirit, along with an impression of his being in temporal want. He was strongly moved to plead with God for "daily bread," for His child, and so constantly was he thinking of him for three days, that at midday of the fourth, he resolved to set out for John's house, and he gave himself little rest till he reached it. Full of the impression that stirred him from home, he arrived at the house, and entering it, went at once to the place where the meal-chest used to be, and, to his astonishment, found it nearly full. "This is a strange way, Robert, of coming into a friend's house," John said, as he advanced to salute him, "were you afraid I had no food to give you, if

you should remain with me to-night?" "No," was Robert's answer, "but that meal-chest gave me no small trouble for the last few days; but if I had known it was so far from being empty, as I find it is, you had not seen me here to-day." "When did you begin to think of it?" John inquired. Robert mentioned the day and the hour when his anxiety about his friend began. "Well, Robert," John said, "the meal-chest was then as empty as it could be; but how long were you praying that it might be filled?" "For three days and a half, I could scarcely think of any thing else," Robert answered. "O what a pity," his friend said, "you did not complete the prayers of the fourth day; for on the first, I got a boll of meal, another on the second, and a third on the day following, but, on the fourth day, only half a boll arrived, but now you are come yourself, and I count you better than them all." Then, rejoicing in each other's love, and in the love of their Father in heaven, who heareth the cry of the needy, they warmly embraced each other.

A still more remarkable person then resided within the bounds of the Eriboll Mission—Miss Margaret Macdiarmid, afterwards Mrs Mackay. She was a native of Argyleshire, and came to reside in Sutherland along with a brother. During his lifetime she was known only as a giddy girl, full of fun, and with a way of doing things quite unlike that of all around her. It was her brother's death that was the means of fixing her attention on eternal things. He had been deer-stalking on a winter day, when the lakes were frozen over. Anxious to be at a certain point before the herd of deer, he ventured on a frozen lake, that lay between him and his goal. He had not gone

far when the ice gave way, and he sank in a moment and was drowned. The shock to his sister was appalling, but the season of her anguish was the Lord's set "time of love." Her soul's state and danger soon drew her mind from the affliction of her brother's death; and she was the subject of a searching work of conviction, when my father, says Dr Kennedy, came to EriboM. Under his preaching she was led to the foundation laid in Zion, and her new life began, in a flush of fervent love, that seemed to know no waning till her dying day. She was one among a thousand. Her brilliant wit, her exuberant spirits, her intense originality of thought and speech and manner, her great faith, and her fervent love, formed a combination but rarely found.

During the summer of each year, she was accustomed, for a long time, to come to Ross-shire, in order to be present on communion seasons. Her visits sometimes extended to Edinburgh and Glasgow. On one occasion she abruptly announced to her husband her intention of starting for the south. Her purse was, at the time, almost empty, and her husband could not replenish it; and she was also in a very delicate state of health. All this her husband was careful to bring before her, with a view to dissuading her from attempting the journey she proposed. But, assured that the Lord had called her to go, she would not look at the "lion in the way," and met every reference to her empty purse by saying "the children ought not to provide for the fathers, but the fathers for the children, and it is not the Father in heaven who will fail to do so." In faith she started, and not a mile had she walked, when a gig drew up beside her, and the gentleman who drove it, kindly asked her



to take a seat. Thanking him in her own warm way, she sprang into the gig, and was carried comfortably all the way to the Manse of Killearnan. But it was the smallest part of her journey to Edinburgh that was passed on reaching Killearnan, and she could not calculate on travelling over the rest of it with an empty purse. Her faith, however, failed not, and "the Lord will provide" was her answer to every fear that arose in her heart, and to the anxieties expressed to her by others. Hearing that the sacrament of the Supper was to be dispensed at Kirkhill, on the following week, she resolved to attend it, and to postpone her visit to the south till after it was over. She went, and on Monday a gentleman made up to her, after the close of the service, who handed to her a sum of money, at the request of a lady, who had been moved to offer her the gift. Mrs Mackay gratefully accepted it; but being accompanied on her way back to Killearnan by a group of worthies, all of whom she knew to be poor, she divided all the money among them, assured that it was for them she received it, and that provision for her journey would be sent by some other hand. Her expectation was realised, a sum fully sufficient was given to her, and she started on her journey to the south.

Travelling by the stage-coach, she was accompanied by several strangers, who were quite struck with her manner, and afterwards fascinated by her conversation. One of them venturing to ask whence she had come, her beautiful and striking answer was, "I am come from Cape Wrath, and I am bound for the Cape of Good Hope." On one account alone, were they disposed to quarrel with her. At that time there was a change of drivers at each stage, and at every

halt, "Remember the coachman," was called out at the window. Mrs Mackay invariably gave a silver coin and a good advice to each of the drivers. Her companions, not liking to be out-done by their strange fellow-passenger, and liking still less to part so freely with their money, at last remonstrated. "We cannot afford to give silver always," one of them said, "and we cannot keep pace with you in liberality." "The King's daughter must travel as becomes her rank," she said, as she again handed the silver coin, and spoke the golden counsel to the driver. Before they parted, her companions were persuaded she was the cleverest, and the pleasantest, but the strangest, person they had ever met. She was usually called "the woman of great faith." "The woman of great faith!" a minister once exclaimed, on being introduced to her for the first time. "No, no," she quickly said; "but the woman of small faith in the great God."

Once, while preaching on a Sabbath, the minister of Killearnan said, in a very marked and emphatic way, "There is one, now present, who, before coming into the meeting was engaged in bargaining about his cattle, regardless alike of the day, and of the eye, of the Lord. Thou knowest that I speak the truth, and listen, while I declare to thee, that if the Lord ever hath mercy on thy soul, thou wilt yet be reduced to seek, as alms, thy daily bread." The confidence with which this was said, was soon and sorely tried; and he passed a sleepless night, under the fear that he had spoken unadvisedly. At breakfast, next morning, in his father's house, several neighbouring farmers were present, one of whom said to him, as they sat at table, "How did you know that I was

selling my heifers yesterday to the drover?" "Did you do so," my father quietly asked him. "I can't deny it," was the farmer's answer. Directing on him one of his searching glances, the minister said, "Remember the warning that was given you, for you will lose, either your soul, or your substance." "But you will not tell me how you knew it?" the farmer asked. The only reply to this was, in the words of Scripture, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." Some of those who heard the warning given to him, were often applied to for alms by that farmer, during the latter years of his life.

On another occasion, in the same place, while warning sinners of their danger in a Christless state, he suddenly paused, and in a subdued and solemn tone, said, "There is a sinner in this place, very ripe for destruction, who shall this night be suddenly summoned to a judgment-seat." Next morning the neighbours observed flames issuing from a hut, not far from the "meeting-house," which was occupied by a woman, notorious for immorality, and in which, when they were able to enter, they found but the charred bones of its miserable tenant. These are indubitable facts, if not, they were not recorded here, though perhaps some may sneer as they read them, and others may shake their wise heads over the supposed imprudence of stating them.

The following extract contains so much that is pertinent to the subject in hand that we give it in full:—

A more interesting case, than any yet given, must now be added, as the last in the sample of converts in Killearnan. Mary Macrae lived in Lochbroom till she was more than fifty years of age.

She was regarded by all her acquaintances as a witless creature that could not be trusted, as she herself used to say, "even with the washing of a pot." The little intellect she had was in a state of utter torpor, nothing moved it into activity. Any attempt to educate her was regarded as quite hopeless. Her life was indeed a cheerless waste, during her "years of ignorance." Regarded as a simpleton by her neighbours, and as a burden by her relatives, she was a stranger even to the happiness which human kindness gives; and no light or joy from heaven had yet reached her alienated soul. On a Saturday, as she sat by the fire in her bothy at Lochbroom, the idea of going to Killearnan came into her mind. Whence, or how, it came to her, she could not tell, but she found it in her mind, and she could not shake it out. She rose from her seat, threw on her cloak, and started for Killearnan. She had never been there before, although she had often heard it spoken of; the journey was long and lonesome, but she kept on her way, and asking direction as she went on, she at last reached the old church of Killearnan, as the people were assembling on the Sabbath morning. Following the people, she entered the church. During the sermon, the voice of the Son of God was heard by Mary's quickened soul. She saw His beauty, as no child of darkness ever saw it, and with her heart she said, before she left the church that day, "I am the Lord's."

Never, from that day till her death, did Mary return to her former home. Where she had found the Lord, there she resolved to cast her lot. But the joy of her espousals, was soon rudely broken, and deep, for a season, was the agony of her soul thereafter. I used to know her, then, as "foolish Mary,"

and wondered what would move my father to admit her to his study, but the time came, when I accounted it, one of the highest privileges of my lot, that I could admit her to my own. By degrees, she was raised out of the depths of her sore distress. Marvellous was the minuteness with which Mary's case was dealt with by the preacher, Sabbath after Sabbath. Every fear was met, every difficulty solved, that distressed and troubled her; and she, whom "the wise and prudent" would despise, seemed the special favourite of heaven, among all the children of Zion, who were fed in Killearnan. Her mind was opened up, to understand the truth, in a way quite peculiar, and she was led into a course of humble walking with her God.

Owing to the feebleness of her intellect, she could directly apprehend only a logical statement of the very simplest kind. The truth was first pictured, in an allegory, in her imagination, and then, holding the statement of it before her understanding, and its symbol beside it, she examined and compared them both; able to receive from the former, into her understanding, only what was made clear by the latter, and refusing to receive from the latter, into her heart all that did not accord with the former. Regarding a merely imaginative as necessarily a merely carnal view of spiritual truths, one could not but be staggered, at first, before Mary's habits of thought. But, in course of time, they would furnish, to a wise observer, a very distinct delineation of the proper offices of the various mental faculties, in relation to "the things of God." Being all feeble, each required to do its utmost in its own peculiar place, ere a truth, presented to her mind, could reach her heart. Because of this,



they could the more easily be seen at work, in all her mental processes. Her imagination was employed in introducing the truth into her understanding: and this must always be its handmaid work, about "the things of God." It must not convey the truth directly to the heart; it must only help its passage thither, through the understanding. When it assumes a more lordly function, the light which it furnishes, cannot be safe, nor the feeling which it produces healthful.

Like the sickly child in a family, Mary was all the more closely and tenderly dealt with, owing to her very feebleness. Her imagination could not form the emblem required to assist her understanding; and the illustrations she employed seemed to have been the Lord's own suggestions. She could not read, and, in her feeble memory, but little bible truth was stored. The word seemed, on that account, to have been directly given her by her heavenly Teacher. As she could not repair to her Bible, to search for it, her daily bread for her soul, came to her like the manna, always fresh from heaven, right down upon her case. Peculiarly near was thus her intercourse with God, just because of her very weakness.

Her way of telling any of her views or feelings would be quite startling to a listener, at first. It was always easier for her to give the matter as she found it in the emblem, than embodied in a formal statement. She seemed, on that account, to one who knew her not, to be telling of some dream or vision she had seen. It was only after she had told the allegory, that she could attempt to state what it was intended to illustrate. The emblem was not constructed by her to make her meaning clear to another;

it was presented to her by the Lord, to make a truth clear to herself. She always felt that it was something given to her; and it was always as vivid as a scene before her eyes. She could not dispense with it, either in examining what she sought to know, or in describing what she sought to tell. Meeting a young man once, who was on the eve of license, and much cast down in prospect of the work before him, she said, "I saw you lately in a quagmire, with a fishing-rod in your hand, and you and it were sinking together, and you cried, as if you would never rise again; but I saw you again, on the bank of a broad river, and the joy of your heart was in the smile on your face, and you were returning home with your rod on your shoulder, and a basket full of fish in your hand"; and then, in broken words, she spoke of his present fears, and of the joy awaiting him in the future.

Of all I ever knew, she was the one who seemed to enjoy the greatest nearness to God in prayer. The whole case of one, whom she carried on her spirit before the throne of grace, seemed to be uncovered before her. She could follow him with the closest sympathy in his cares and sorrows, during his course through life, with no information regarding him, but such as was given her in her intercourse with God. A minister, to whom she was attached, having been sorely tempted during the week, and, finding no relief on Sabbath morning, resolved not to go out to church at all that day. About an hour before the time for beginning public worship, Mary arrived at his house. As she came to the door, he was seated in a room just beside it, and overheard a conversation between Mary and the person who admitted her. "What is the matter with the minister?" she asked. "I don't

know," was the reply; "but I never saw him in greater distress." "I knew that," Mary said, "and he is tempted not to go out to church to-day; but he will go after all; the snare will be broken, and he will get on the wing in his work to-day." She then repeated a passage of Scripture, which was "a word in season" to him, who listened out of sight, and a staff to help him on his way to "the gates of Zion."

It was quite extraordinary how her mind would be led to take an interest in the cause of Christ, in places and in countries, of which she knew not even the names. Instances of this might be given so remarkable, that I cannot venture to risk my credibility by recording them. One only will be given. Coming to me (Dr Kennedy) once, with an anxious expression on her face, she asked if there was any minister, in a certain district, which she could only indicate by telling that it was not far from a place of which she knew the name. I told her there was, "But why do you wish to know?" I asked. "I saw him lately," was her answer, "fixing a wing to each of his sides, and rising, on these wings, into the air, till he was very high; and then, suddenly, he fell, and was dashed to pieces on the ground;" and she added, "I think, if there is such a minister, that he has but a borrowed godliness, and that his end is near." There was just such a minister, and his end was near, for, before a week had passed, I received the tidings of his death.

Symptoms of cancer in her breast having appeared, and medical advice having been taken, she was told that nothing could be done for her, but the removal of the affected part. She was then about sixty years of age, and it seemed to all her friends that she would

be running a great risk by submitting to the operation. But Mary had asked counsel of Him, to whom she went with all her cares, and, with an assurance of recovery, she resolved to have the cancerous tumour removed. The operation was performed. A few days thereafter she was in the burn of Ferintosh, hearing the Gospel, and never suffered again, from the same cause, till her death. Sweet to all who knew her, and who saw in her the working of the grace of God, is the memory of that simple, loving, holy woman. She is now at her rest, in her Father's house; and those who loved her best cannot wish that she still were here. But, since she has passed from the earth, they often sadly miss the cheering streak of light her presence used to cast across their dark and lonesome path, in this vale of tears.

A reminiscence of another of the minister of Killearnan's hearers from the west, is connected with the circumstances of his death. Having attended at Contin on a Communion Sabbath, when my father officiated, after all the other communicants had taken their places at the table, he, for some reason that he did not live to reveal, still remained in his seat. The minister said, "There is still some communicant here who has not come forward, and, till that person takes a seat at the table, I cannot proceed with the service." Another verse was then sung, but "the merchant from Kiltarlity" did not come. He was not in the minister's eye, though there was some one on his spirit, when he said, "I implore you to come forward, for this is your last opportunity of showing forth the Lord's death, till he come, for, if I am not greatly mistaken, you will not reach your home in life after the close of this service." The merchant then came

forward, and no sooner had he taken his seat at the table than the minister said, "We may now proceed with the service." On the dismissal of the congregation on Monday, the merchant set his face on his home; but, while crossing the ford of the Orrin, he was carried down by the stream and was drowned.

Hector Maclean was one of his hearers from Dingwall. "Little Hector" he was usually called, for he was not four inches above five feet in height. In his youth he had been engaged in smuggling, as in those days was too commonly the habit. Having lost, by a seizure, the produce of a small quantity of barley, which he had purchased on credit, he was not able to pay for it. Determined, even then, to owe no man anything, he accepted of the bounty that was offered for a substitute, by one who was balloted for the army; and the sum that was given to him just covered the price of the barley. Soon after joining his regiment, he was sent to Spain with the army under Sir John Moore. He went through all the adventures of the memorable retreat, that terminated in the battle and victory of Corunna. Of all his regiment there were only seven who, on landing in Britain, were healthy and unwounded; and Hector was one of them. Returning to Dingwall, after the peace, he resided there till his death. Not long after his return, as he was dressing himself on a morning early in August, he was seized with an unaccountable desire to go to Cromarty. He had never been there before, and was conscious of no inducement to visit it; but he could not repress the feeling, that had so suddenly seized him. He started on the journey, not knowing whither or wherefore he went. Reaching Cromarty before noon, he followed groups of people,



who were gathering to an eminence above the town. It was the Saturday of a communion season there. My father preached outside in Gaelic, and Hector was a hearer. The doctrine preached that day, the Lord applied with power to his heart, and before the sermon was over, he had given himself to the Lord. Few lives were more unblemished than Hector's, from that day till his death, few witnesses for Christ more faithful than he, and in simplicity and godly sincerity but very few Christians could excel him.

The sudden death of Mr Fraser, a neighbour minister in Kirkhill, deeply affected the Minister of Killearnan. The tidings reached Killearnan after Mr Kennedy had gone out to church, on the day of the monthly lecture. To the surprise of all, he expressed, in public prayer that day, his persuasion that a breach had been made on the walls of Zion in the north, by the removal of one of the eminent servants of the Lord. On coming out of church, and being informed of Mr Fraser's death, he said: "I was prepared for this."

Often, says Dr Kennedy, did he distinctly announce the event of the Disruption. Dr Macdonald has told me, he continues, with what surprise he heard him once say, while preaching in the Church of Ferintosh in 1829, "This crowded church shall yet become a place into which none who fear the Lord will dare to enter," adding, "not long before this change takes place, I shall be removed to my rest, but many who now hear me shall see it." From that period till his death, his anticipations were more and more vivid. The coming crisis seemed to emerge, before his eyes, more and more distinctly, out of the mist that lay on the future, and that hid its secrets from the eyes

of others; and his solicitude, in prospect of the Disruption, wrung more groans from his heart, than the actual experience of the trial from the hearts of many who survived it.

His last pastoral visit was to a pious couple in the east end of his parish, who were apparently dying, and very anxious to see him. The husband was one of his elders, but both in intellect and in spirituality excelled by his wife. Among other questions, he asked them individually. "Do you believe that your affliction was appointed by God in the everlasting covenant?" The wife was first addressed, and her reply was, "I believe that it is permitted by God in His providence, but I have not attained to believe that it was ordered in the covenant." The husband's answer was, "I cannot even say what my wife has just said." "You are a step behind her, Donald," his minister said, "and as surely as she is before you in this, she will be before you in heaven." And so it happened; though the husband was both older, and a greater invalid than his wife.

Dr Kennedy closes his book with the following account of his father's last days:—His (the Minister of Killearnan's) references to his death were frequent in his preaching during the last year of his life, and his appeals to his hearers were peculiarly earnest and solemn. His anticipation of death was so assured, that he could not refrain from referring to it, and he himself preparing, he desired to prepare his people also, for the parting which drew near. He would announce the subject of a course of sermons, and open it up; but instead of resuming it next Sabbath, he would mention a new text. This again would be laid aside for another. He was thus hurried over a

series of texts, in such pressing haste, that he could not but direct the attention of his people to the fact, entreating them to observe how his Master was urging him to fulfil his ministry with all haste, as the end of it was near. One of his last Sabbath texts was Rev. iii., 20. His sermons on that verse were very remarkable, and were, indeed, like the utterances of one who was just going to step across the threshold of eternity.

For a few weeks before his death, he preached every Tuesday evening, from the words, "We are come to God, the Judge of all." This text was the announcement of his death to his people, and his sermons contained much of his own feeling in prospect of that event. His last sermon in church was preached on the Tuesday evening before his death, and it closed the series of discourses on the text last mentioned. At the close of service, he announced that on Thursday he would preach in the schoolhouse in the eastern district of his parish, in order to take that last opportunity of wiping off his skirts the blood of the people who resided there. The congregation was then dismissed by him, under the assured persuasion that he and they would never meet again on earth. On coming out of church, he stood for a few minutes looking to the people as they were retiring under the clear moonlight. "My poor people," he was heard exclaiming, by one who came up beside him, and whose approach caused him to turn away, and to hurry on to the Manse.

All this time he was in perfect health, his step almost as firm and elastic as when he was in the prime of his manhood. The usual indications of approaching dissolution were entirely wanting, and yet his

persuasion of death being nigh, was quite assured. His sermon on Thursday was on spiritual worship, and in preaching it, his whole soul seemed to go out in aspirations after the pure service of heaven. On Friday his throat became affected. Inflammation set in, and continued to make progress. He expressed no anxiety, and uttered no complaint, and his family had no distinct anticipation of danger. Remaining in bed, he seemed lost in contemplation, an expression of placid joy resting on his face. He had calmly laid himself down to die. His work was done; he knew that his eternal rest was nigh; and with his eye fixed on the glory that was dawning on his vision, he awaited with joyful expectations the coming of death. His only reply to all inquiries about his health was, "I'll soon be quite well." While his wife and a pious friend were sitting in his room, not till then excited by alarm as to the issue of his illness, their attention was suddenly arrested by sounds of the sweetest melody. Such was the softness of the strange music, they felt as if it could not have been a thing of earth, and while it lasted, they could only listen in solemn silence. When the spell was broken, Mrs Kennedy hastened to ask him if he had heard any strange music. He gave no answer, but beckoned her to be silent, with an expression of absorbed attention and of ecstasy on his face. Her rising fears then grew strong, and, in a crushing foreboding of her loss, closed upon her heart. The medical man arrived soon thereafter, and, with the utmost kindness and with all his skill, applied the fitting remedies. His patient meekly submitted to the prescribed treatment, but the disease was quietly, though surely, making progress, and, on Sabbath evening he fell asleep in Jesus.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE PETTY SEER.

The "Prophecies" of the Rev. John Morrison, minister of Petty, near Inverness, have for generations been almost as well known in the Highlands as those of the Brahan Seer himself. While the latter have, perhaps, been more popularly known in particular districts, the Morrison Prophecies have been part and parcel of the religious traditions of the whole north and west. In this respect they have in more recent years taken their place alongside the many similar stories that are related in Dr Kennedy's "Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire" as a never-failing source of supply of those latter-day Highlanders who still delight in retailing the sayings and doings of the religious notables of the past.

The Rev. John Morrison of Petty was a son of the Rev. John Morrison, sometime minister of Urray, in Ross-shire, who was a son of the famous tacksman of Bragar—John Morrison, who had "Ladies modesty, Bishop's gravity, Lawyer's eloquence, and Captain's conduct," who was personally known to Martin, and is referred to in his "Western Isles." The John Morrison (of Petty) was missionary at Amulree in 1745; he was settled in Petty in 1759, his successor being appointed in 1774. In the New Statistical Account of Inverness-shire, there is the following account of how he came to be inducted to Petty:—

There was a merchant in Inverness to whom a



follower of the Lovat family in the Aird was deeply in debt. As no attorney in Inverness would undertake to recover the debt, the merchant employed a writer in Edinburgh, Mackenzie of Devlin, who was factor to the Earl of Moray and other proprietors in the north. Mr Mackenzie succeeded in forcing payment of the debt. The Frasers consulted how they might best avenge this audacious interference with the liberty of their clansman. As Mackenzie was in the habit of coming to the north at certain periods of the year, it was resolved to waylay him in Slochdmuice on the first occasion, and to put him to death. A Mr Nicolson, minister of Kiltarlity, was present at dinner when this scheme was concocted in the house of the chief or some leading clansman. To send a letter to Mackenzie by a bearer or by post would at that time scarcely have escaped discovery; and, if ever discovered, would end in the ruin of Mr Nicolson as a traitor to his friends. The contrivance he fell upon was to write to Mr Morrison to meet him on urgent business. Morrison accordingly came to the Aird, was informed by Mr Nicolson of the intentions of the Frasers, and was despatched to Mr Mackenzie of Devlin to caution him never to come to the north without a strong escort of friends. On his next visit to the Highlands, a numerous body of tenantry was requested to meet him at Dalwhinnie; and the Frasers, finding him so protected, did not venture to make their attack. Mackenzie rewarded Mr Morrison for his service by procuring his appointment to the church of Petty on the removal of Mr Shaw to Forres.

John Morrison (of Petty) was known as the "Bard," and several of his popular Gaelic songs was to the lady whom he had baptised and who afterwards

became his wife Among these may be mentioned those beautiful lyrics beginning:—

“Mo nighean dubh, tha boidheach dubh  
 Mo nighean dubh na treig mi.”  
 “Ho mo Mhairi loaghach,  
 Ho mo Mhairi ghrinn.”

Another of his songs was written in praise of the Earl of Moray, and begins:—

“Deoch Slainte an Iarld chluitaich,  
 Thug smuid dhuinn sa bhaile so.”

The author of the “History of the Morrisons” says—“According to Lewis tradition, he (Mr Morrison) was chosen minister of Petty in a competition with four other candidates. He was a highly-gifted and orthodox preacher, and was believed to be gifted with the spirit of prophecy in a wonderful manner.” In his “Traditions of the Morrisons,” Captain F. W. L. Thomas, R.N., gives the following instance of his predictions:—

“Mr John had a family of sons and daughters, and an orphan girl, Kate, was brought up with them. After some years Mrs Morrison died, and Kate had charge of the household. At last it was whispered about that Kate had been indiscreet, and an elder informed Mr John of the suspicion. The minister seemed to excuse Kate; said that human nature was fallible, and a great deal more which it would be irreverent in me to quote. The elder admitted that all his reverence had said was quite orthodox, but asked permission to summon Kate before the Kirk-Session to be questioned. The first day Kate was called before the session, and asked who was her paramour. She

said she did not know his name, and that he was a drover. The elders became clamorous and threatening in order to extort a confession; but the girl would only give the same answer. At last Mr John interposed; he said he was more grieved than any of them for her folly; but that she ought not to be treated so harshly, and that her crime should not debar her from his protection and sympathy if her future behaviour evinced a sincere repentance. The members of Session could not tell why the minister should be displeased at their endeavour to force a confession, and they therefore began to suspect the minister himself. The first Sunday after the Kirk-Session one of the parishioners who had been incontinent was ordered to stand up, and the kirk-officer was directed to put the sack-cloth over his shoulders; but the man made so much resistance that Mr John cried out to leave him alone till next Sunday, when he would have a companion. Everybody in the church wondered who this would be. Early next week one of the elders, being at market, heard it said that Mr John was the delinquent, and went to tell him so. "Ah! well," said Mr John, "half a word from the Judge's mouth at the day of judgment will clear me of that charge." The elder would rather that his reverence might be cleared in this life. On the next night Kate knocked at the window of a certain married man; she said there was no use in her screening him any longer, for that he himself must have told the minister of their acquaintance. The man said that he had done nothing of that sort. "Then who could have told him," said Kate; "it will be well for you to go where he is to-morrow and own your guilt, and thereby you may come off the easier." On the following Sunday the man was sack-clothed along with

the other delinquent, as Mr John had predicted in the hearing of the whole congregation.

Under the title of "The Petty Seer," Mr A. B. MacLennan has published a collection of the "wonderful sayings" attributed to the Rev. John Morrison, which includes most of those that are floating about in oral tradition. Mr MacLennan's instances, he says, are taken down from persons whose parents heard them from Mr Morrison's own lips. Many of Morrison's Prophecies are of somewhat similar nature to those of the "Braham Seer," referring to happenings that were to occur in the near or distant future, and in the case of the Petty Seer the predictions are in every way more distinctly authentic than those of the Braham prophet.

Here is one of his characteristic utterances:—After one of his sermons to his people, he suddenly exclaimed—"Ye sinful and stiff-necked people, God will, unless ye turn from your evil ways, sweep you ere long into the place of torment; and, as a sign of the truth of what I say, 'Clach dubh an Abain,' large though it be, will be carried soon, without human agency, a considerable distance seawards." There was nothing so unlikely to happen, yet that stone was actually removed some twenty-six years afterwards and carried out to sea a distance of 260 yards. The following reference to this stone is taken from "Anderson's Guide to the Highlands":—"On the south side of the bay (of Petty) an immense stone, weighing at least eight tons, which marked the boundaries between the estates of Lord Moray and Culloden, was, on the night of Saturday, the 20th February, 1799, removed and carried forward into the sea about 260 yards. Some

believe that nothing short of an earthquake could have removed such a mass, but the more probable opinion is that a large sheet of ice, which had collected to the thickness of 18 inches round the stone, had been raised by the tide, lifting the stone with it, and that their motion forward was aided and increased by a tremendous hurricane which blew from the land."

Mr Morrison thus predicted the evictions that took place in the parish of Petty:—"Large as the Ridge of Petty is ('Druim Pheitidh') and thickly as it is now peopled, the day will come, and it is not far off, when there will only be three smokes ('tri ceenan') in it, and the crow of the cock at each cannot be heard, owing to the distance, at either of the others. After a time, however, the lands will again be divided, and the parish of Petty become as populous as it is at this day." The first part of this prediction has occurred, and the second awaits fulfilment. At the time the prediction was given there were fifteen well-to-do tenants in Kerrowaird, sixteen in Morayston, and five in Balmachree. This and the prophecy relating to the removal of the "Clach dubh an Abain" are given by Mackenzie in his "Prophecies of the Brahan Seer," but they have always been claimed as predictions by Mr Morrison.

Mr MacLennan says:—"With reference to a piece of land on the heights above Morayston, which was then overgrown with broom and called "Cnoc-a-Bhealaidh," or Broom Hill, Mr Morrison said that beautiful corn would yet be waving on it, and that after a time the corn would give place to broom and wood, and these again to corn, and that then the parish would be populous and the people flourishing. I am assured, by people who saw it, that the place referred to had



rich corn growing on it, and that there was a township near it, but that it was laid waste at the time of the evictions. It is now under wood, and it is evident that many years will pass ere "Cnoc-a-Bhealaidh" is turned to a fertile field, and be tilled and sown, and Petty be as populous as it was in the days of the Seer.

On one occasion Mr Morrison had some cattle grazing on the Braes of Culloden. He sent his man servant one day to see how the cattle fared. On his return to the Manse the man informed the master that he had seen "all" the cattle, and that they were doing well. "Have you seen them 'all' to-day, William?" asked the minister. "Yes, every head of them," answered the man. "You are quite sure you saw them 'all'?" "Oh, yes; I am quite sure I saw them 'all,' Mr Morrison." "Well, William, you will go as fast as you can with a horse and cart and bring the dun stot home. He is lying at this moment on his back in a ditch, with two of his legs broken. Get some men to go along to assist you. You have told me a falsehood, for you did 'not see' the poor dun stot to-day. You must pray for forgiveness for this transgression, or it may be against you at the Day of Judgment." The man afterwards confessed that he did "not" see the dun stot when visiting the cattle that morning, and that he told a lie to the minister when he said that he had seen them "all." "But," said he, "I might not have tried to conceal anything from Mr Morrison, for he knows everything full well beforehand. I went to the ditch indicated by him, and found the animal in the position mentioned by him."

Mr Morrison was riding one day into Inverness to officiate at a Communion service. His servant lad accompanied him. When they came near Milton of

Culloden the servant remarked that a number of people were on their way to the Communion. "You see a large number of people there," observed Mr Morrison, "yet only six of them will go to heaven. As proof that I know the truth of what I say, the innkeeper there (pointing to the inn then near the road at Milton) who is now in good health, will be in eternity before you return to Inverness." When the lad was passing Milton on his return journey he was horrified to learn that, under the influence of drink, the innkeeper had fallen down the stairs a short time previously, and died immediately.

A number of the women of Fisherton, in Petty, were in Inverness selling fish. After disposing of their fish they retired to a public-house and had some drink. The road from Inverness to Fisherton passed at that time by the Manse of Petty. Mr Morrison observed the unsteady gait of some of the women as they approached the Manse, and in order to shame them, he snatched up his violin and hastened out to meet them. One of them was bold enough to request him to play a tune. He at once complied, and as he did so the whole of the women were instantly enjoying a happy dance on the road. Soon after, however, one of the elders hearing of this unseemly conduct on the part of the minister, went one evening to the Manse to chide him for it. "How could I," answered Mr Morrison calmly, refuse to play a tune for the woman who asked me to do so? The holy angels themselves will before long tune their harps for her. It would be better than a thousand worlds to hear the melodious music in the midst of which her soul will before this day week pass into glory." This woman took ill and died a few days after.

Mr Morrison, late one night, in the midst of a snowstorm, requested his pony to be saddled for him. This was done, but although he requested his man servant to accompany him to a certain place which he mentioned, the man refused to go on account of the fury of the storm. "Well, then," said Mr Morrison, "I shall have to go alone." He left and at once made for a little lake called Lochandunty, which is on the southern confines of the parish of Petty. There he met a young female. "What is that you have got in your bosom?" he instantly asked. "Nothing, sir," was her reply. "Tell me no lies," said the other; "I know well what you have. But before you part with it give it a kiss, and say 'May God bless you.'" The young woman did as requested—she kissed her newly-born child, and besought the Divine blessing on it. It transpired that she had gone there to murder her child.

A newly-born infant was found one morning on the Maunse doorstep. When apprised of the find, Mr Morrison ordered it to be brought into the manse and cared for. Weeks and months passed, and the child remained unclaimed, and no effort was made by the minister to discover its parents. This indifference led some to suspect that the minister was the father of the child. A year afterwards, a meeting of the Kirk-Session was held, at which two of the elders were deputed to accompany the minister to the house of the parents of the foundling. These, with the child and its nurse, accordingly set out, but none of them except the minister knew where or who the parents were. They proceeded by the road to Inverness, thence to Kessock Ferry, which they crossed. They then took the road by Drumderfit, at which place they came upon

three men at work near the road. The minister, when he saw them, requested one of the elders to bid the centre man of the three to come to take charge of the child which he left a year ago at the Manse door of Petty. The elder did so, and the man came at once and claimed his child. He quietly thanked the minister, and said that his wife died when giving birth to the child. Being poor, he could not keep it, so he laid it at the Manse door, knowing that there it would be well cared for.

There was a certain well from which Mr Morrison desired water to be brought to the house for drinking purposes, and according to custom, the Sunday's supply was brought in on Saturday. The well was some little distance away, the churchyard coming in between it and the manse. To shorten the journey, however, the servants often crossed through the churchyard. It happened on one Saturday evening that the usual jar of water was forgotten, and, unfortunately for the servants, Mr Morrison asked for a drink of the water after nightfall on Sabbath evening. One of the girls ran with all haste through the churchyard to the well. As she was long in returning, however, the other girl was asked why the drink was not brought as requested. "You will get it immediately, sir," she replied. "No," rejoined the minister, "I cannot, for the jar is broken and the water spilled; and you had better go quickly and assist your companion out of the grave into which she has fallen in the churchyard." The girl at once proceeded to the churchyard, and there, to her great surprise, found her companion scrambling in a grave that had been opened on the Saturday evening, and into which she stumbled in the dark.

One of his parishioners named Patience, a native

of Fisherton, was often exhorted by Mr Morrison to attend the means of grace, but to no purpose. One day Mr Morrison was standing with a friend in front of the Manse, when he suddenly exclaimed—"That poor man Patience has had many invitations and opportunities to attend the Gospel ordinances, but he has lost them now for ever." It was afterwards found that Patience went in a boat that day to Inverness, and at the time the minister spoke, in endeavouring to get into the boat to return home, fell into the water and was drowned.

One who lived in the neighbourhood of Petty was in the habit of continuously begging assistance from Mr Morrison. This he continued to do till the minister could no longer render him the necessary assistance—his purse was empty. So he told him, one day when he called for money, to exercise a little patience and he would get some assistance soon, "for," said he, "the devil is preparing something for you in the east end of the parish. I cannot say what it is, only you are sure to get it." Some time afterwards a young girl in the east end of his parish gave birth to an illegitimate child, and its father, who was a man in comfortable circumstances, being brought before the Session, was mulct in a heavy fine. Part of this fine was given to the poor man referred to, and thus the minister's prediction came true, though at the time he gave it none except the girl and her paramour knew of her pregnancy.

Donald Macrae was the name of a young man who lived at Gallowhill (now Morayhill), in Petty, when Mr Morrison was minister there. Donald was one of the most mischievous and incorrigible youths in the parish. His sole delight was in annoying and setting



his neighbours at variance with one another. He often amused himself, too, on Sabbaths when the people were in church with setting the water on the mill wheels. (There were several meal mills then in Petty). Mr Morrison exerted himself to the utmost to reclaim the wanderer and lead him to Christ, but all his efforts were evidently to no purpose; he was as heedless and roving as ever. Bent on some mischief, he went one Sabbath to church. He had to sit on the front of the gallery, for the church was full to overflowing. He soon resorted to some mischief, but when he was in the act of committing it he overbalanced himself and fell down in the middle of the people in the area of the church. Mr Morrison, who was preaching at the time, stopped for a little, and, observing that he sustained no injury by the fall, he entered apparently into the spirit of the poet and seer, and said—

“A Dhomsnuill mhic Rath, gun ruth gun rath  
Thig latha orsta fhathast.  
Chur thu eagal air na bha nan duisg,  
Is dhuisg thu na bha nan cadal.”

Donald Macrae, who's aye astray,  
A day will seize thee yet.  
Thou scared all those who were awake,  
And waken'd those who slept.

On the following Sabbath, as soon as the people left for church, Donald went to Muilean-an-t-saill, or the salt water mill, which was in the neighbourhood of the church, for the purpose of setting it in motion; but when he was in the act of opening the sluice he thought he saw a large, black open hand coming towards him from the water, for, as he supposed, the purpose of seizing him. He ran away home in great

terror, and from that day forward he was a changed man, and became an eminent Christian. He afterwards composed several religious poems, a number of which have been published, and of which a recent writer has said:—"Macrae's poetry evinces powers of the highest order. He combines the spiritual insight and holy sympathies of George Herbert, with the tuneful subtlety of Shelly. His spiritualising faculty is exceedingly keen—his analyses and allegorical descriptions of the Christian experience being so profound and mystical that ordinary, simple Christian minds utterly fail to understand them. In him are poetic embodiments of that spirit of severe subjectivity, of unsparing self-anatomy, which to this day characterises the Christianity of the North of Scotland."

The post-woman at Petty in Morrison's time was one who was rather fond of strong drink. She came one day to Petty with the letters as usual, but was so inebriated that, although she succeeded in reaching within a short distance of Mr Morrison's manse, she could go no further, and there lay down exhausted. There the minister found her, tried to rouse her up, but she only requested him to chant a tune for a dance. The woman got up and danced with all her might, till the minister's man servant came and ordered her away. But the minister at once interposed and said—"Let her alone for some time yet; she is not tired. This is the last reel she will ever dance." This circumstance was the turning-point in her life—it was the means of her conversion—she was never known to drink or dance afterwards.

When just about to retire to bed one night in winter, a sudden impulse caused Morrison to go out to his stackyard. He made straight for a hay stack, and

there he found a man lying shivering with cold. The minister at once told him to get up—that that was not a fit place for a human being on such a night. “I know,” said the minister, “that you have been refused shelter elsewhere; but come along with me and I shall get lodgings for you.” The man at once rose and followed the minister for some distance. On the way the man admitted that he had been refused lodgings in a house some time prior to his going to the stack-yard, but, being a stranger, he did not know the people, or where the house was. On reaching the house the minister roused up the goodman and said to him—“You turned this man (pointing to the stranger) away from your door this evening. This was very unchristian of you to do. Take him in at once and give him food and a bed. Ministers and elders ought to be hospitable to strangers; they may in this way entertain angels unawares.”

Mrs Knowles was one at whose house Mr and Mrs Morrison often called. Staying there overnight on one occasion, it happened that Mr Morrison was unusually restless in the morning, walking ceaselessly to and fro through the sitting-room, and several times went outside. Mrs Morrison remarked to Mrs Knowles that something was troubling her husband that morning. “What in the world can it be?” said Mrs Knowles. “I have not done anything, I hope, to offend him. Mrs Knowles had scarcely done speaking when Mr Morrison entered the apartment, and abruptly enquired, “Are we to have any breakfast here to-day?” “Breakfast is ready,” answered Mrs Knowles, “but I am waiting for such and such a person, for I have sent for him to come to breakfast with us. He is such a good and nice man that I am

sure you will appreciate his company." "I know that you have sent for him," answered Mr Morrison, "and that you think him a good man, but 'good' as he seems in your eyes, you will, before this day six months, shun him as you would a viper. If you wait until he comes we shall go away without breakfast. They at once sat at the table, and as soon as breakfast was over Mr Morrison and his wife left for the Manse. They had but newly left when the person above referred to arrived, and so agreeable was he in his conversation that Mrs Knowles could not help reproaching Mr Morrison for speaking so harshly of him. But before the end of six months it was proved that the "good" man was guilty of such grievous conduct that Mrs Knowles thereafter was compelled to shun him.

Referring to the clergyman who would succeed him in the church of Petty, Mr Morrison said—"Colin John Morrison is laid in his grave, you will get a stammering Lowland minister, who will neither have English nor Gaelic—'Gheibh sibh blobar galld do mhinisteir, aig nach biodh aon chuid beurla na Gaelic.'" Mr Morrison's successor, it appears, had only very imperfectly acquired his Gaelic, and scarcely any person could understand what he endeavoured to utter in that language; his English, some said, was on a par with his Gaelic. He was, nevertheless, "in strength of mind, ecclesiastical knowledge, and methodical habits," second to none. He was minister of Petty from 1774 to 1833.

The Petty Seer himself used to tell of one of his herd-boys who had the gift of Second-Sight. On one occasion this herd-boy was sent by one of the servant girls to the well for a flagon of water. When he

approached the churchyard (which lay between the manse and the well) he saw the figure of a person immediately before him, and, believing it was a ghost, he wished to ascertain whose it was. He accordingly turned up the cuffs of his sleeves. But as soon as he did so he took such a fright that he rushed back to the Manse, closely followed by the spectre. Having got inside the kitchen door, he shut it against his pursuer, who gave it such a violent thud that the building shook almost to its foundation. Mr Morrison heard the noise, and at once called his servant and inquired which of the manse people came in last. The girl told him it was the herd boy. "Go, tell him to come here immediately," said the minister. The girl did as requested, and the boy at once appeared before his master, who said to him, "Why, as you were so foolish as to turn up the cuffs of your sleeves, did you not turn them down again when you saw the apparition following you, for then its progress would not have been hindered. Prepare, my dear boy, for eternity. Within eight days from to-day you will have appeared before the 'Great White Throne' on which the Lord Jesus Christ sits as Judge of all. He died within the time mentioned. The minister had not been told by any human being what the boy had seen or did, and the supposition was that it was none other than his own ghost that he saw.

Writing in "Times of Blessing" for December, 1876, Rev. Donald Corbet, Kinlochbervie, narrates the following:—An idiot in Petty, named Jamie, who lost his parents when he was a child, lived in his father's hut in the neighbourhood of the Manse of Petty and in view of Mr Morrison's study window. He got what he required of the necessities of life from his neigh-



bours. When not in bed or in church, or praying in some secluded spot, he was to be found making paper figures, and sticking or pinning them to bits of wood, to revolve in the wind. The Lord's Day was, however, much appreciated by Jamie. Mr Morrison was an early riser, especially on Sabbath; and he was led to observe that the first smoke he saw on the Sabbath mornings was that which issued from the chimney of Jamie's hut. On one occasion, when the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was to be dispensed in Petty, Mr Morrison was rather surprised to see Jamie presenting himself on the previous Friday evening for a token of admission to the Lord's table. After a pause he began to question him to ascertain whether he had any real knowledge of what he was applying for. To his delight, he soon discovered that Jamie's knowledge of the doctrines of the Truth was clear and coherent. He was confident, too, of his love to the Saviour being of the most ardent kind, and prompted by a real knowledge of the Redeemer's work. The result was that Mr Morrison's heart was powerfully drawn towards Jamie. He therefore requested him to call upon him on the following day after the dismissal of the congregation. The day came, and Jamie presented himself as requested; and Mr Morrison, believing that the Lord might manifest Himself in some special manner to such a person, and being anxious to ascertain if it should prove to be so, he said to him—"Now, Jamie, I give you this token of admission to the Lord's table on condition that, if you hear or see anything particular when at the table, you will tell it to me on Monday." This Jamie promised to do, and when the services were concluded on Monday Jamie presented himself to Mr Morrison as he had

promised. "You were at the Lord's table yesterday, Jamie," said the minister. "Yes, I was," answered the other. "Well, did you see anything while you were at the table?" "Yes, I did," was Jamie's reply. "I saw a beautiful man; He had on a white robe. He came in at the head of the table, and as He came along, He put his hand on the head of one here and there when passing. At length He came to where I was, put His hand on my head, stroked it gently, and said—'Be a good lad till I come. I will come for you a year from to-day, and will bring you to the beautiful place where I dwell.'" On hearing this, Mr Morrison said—"You may now go, Jamie, and remember what you were told by the good Lord of the heavenly land, and be ready waiting for His coming." The anniversary of that Communion Sabbath dawned, and Mr Morrison was in his study as early as was his wont. He looked in the direction of Jamie's hut, but saw no smoke. He waited awhile and looked again, but although the smoke began to rise up from several others, none rose from Jamie's. He then called his man servant, and told him to go to Jamie's house and ascertain the cause that no fire was lighted in it that morning. The man did as desired, and found that Jamie was dead. It appeared that he had expired a short time previously. The body was lying at full length, and the features plainly showed that he had passed away without a struggle.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE BRAHAN SEER.

The Prophecies of the Brahan Seer are well known in the northern Highlands and in the Lews and Skye, and they are confidently believed by Highlanders to be genuine predictions, uttered by the man with whose name they have been associated for well over two hundred years. Whether that be so or not, there are indubitable proofs that particular events that have occurred within recent times were spoken of—long before their occurrence—as events that were foretold by the Brahan Seer. In Mackenzie's "History of the Mackenzies," for instance, there is a letter from the late Duncan Davidson of Tulloch, grandfather of the present laird, and published in that work in the writer's life-time, in which he says (under date May 21, 1878) that "many of these prophecies (of the Brahan Seer) I heard of upwards of seventy years ago, and when many of them were not fulfilled, such as the late Lord Seaforth surviving his sons, and Mrs Stewart-Mackenzie's accident, near Brahan, by which Miss Caroline Mackenzie was killed." Besides that, Tulloch goes on to say that he was a regular visitor at Brahan Castle, and there often heard among members of the family the predictions regarding the House of Seaforth attributed to the Brahan Seer. There are many still living who can remember in their earlier days of predictions by the Brahan Seer which came to pass years after they had first heard them spoken about; and of course there are several of his predictions, still

unfulfilled, which will give opportunity to those who are interested in these things, and who are on the look-out for fulfilments, to test for themselves the claims made on behalf of Coinneach Odhar Fiosaiche, the Gaelic name by which Kenneth Mackenzie, the Brahan Seer, is more popularly known.

In the late Mr Robert Bain's "History of Ross," published by the Pefferside Press, Limited, of Dingwall, in 1899, the author, referring to the Brahan Seer's predictions, says—"One of the most important and authentic has been given above (the Seaforth prediction) and we will add another equally reliable. During the middle of the 17th century no branch of the House of Kintail possessed more apparent vitality than the Fairburn Family. But the Seer, guided by his mysterious prescience, saw that their decay was imminent, and that the worm was about to eat them like wool. A time was at hand, he said, when they would disappear from the land, and when their Tower would so become a desolation that a cow would bring forth a calf in its topmost room. The latter event occurred precisely as stated early in the present century. The Tower had become a ruin and a receptacle for straw, and the historic cow, the property of a distant relative of the present writer, attracted by the fodder scattered about, ascended the spiral stair, and while there gave birth to the calf. By no persuasion, however, could she be brought to descend by the way she came, and had to be lowered by ropes to the ground."

From all accounts it appears that the Brahan Seer was born at Baile-na-Cille, Uig, in the island of Lewis, early in the seventeenth century, his prophecies

having been uttered probably between the years 1630-1679. Being born on the Seaforth property in Lewis, he became known to Lord Seaforth as one who possessed the gift of Second-Sight, and no doubt because of that he not only was employed on the estate, but became a favourite of the family. In his early manhood he removed to the neighbourhood of Brahan Castle, having a house near Loch Ussie. He was a frequent visitor to the Castle, and being possessed of a ready wit he was at times admitted to the company of the Castle parties. Tradition says that when entering his teens, and being still in the Lews, he received a magic stone by which he was enabled to reveal future happenings. There are various versions of the manner in which he became possessed of this stone—some say that he got it when in the Lews, and others after he had come to reside on the Seaforth estate at Brahan. Although the various accounts differ in some respects, they agree in this, that the “gift” of Second-Sight was acquired while he was engaged in the humble occupation of cutting peats or divots, which were in his day, and still are in many places, used as fuel throughout the Highlands of Scotland. One of the accounts says that while resting from his work one day he laid his head upon a little knoll, and waited the arrival of his wife with his dinner, whereupon he fell fast asleep. On awaking, he felt something hard under his head, and examining the cause of the uneasiness, discovered a small round stone with a hole through the middle. He picked it up, and looking through it, saw by the aid of this prophetic stone that his wife was coming to him with a dinner consisting of sowans and milk, polluted, though unknown to her, in a manner which need not



be mentioned. But Coinneach found that though this stone was the means by which a supernatural power had been conferred upon him, it had, on its very first application, deprived him of the sight of that eye with which he looked through it, and he continued ever afterwards "cam," or blind of an eye.

To give another of the traditional accounts, Hugh Miller, in his "Scenes and Legends in the North of Scotland," says:—"When serving as a field labourer with a wealthy clansman who resided somewhere near Brahan Castle, he made himself so formidable to the clansman's wife by his shrewd, sarcastic humour, that she resolved on destroying him by poison. With this design, she mixed a preparation of noxious herbs with his food, when he was one day employed in digging turf in a solitary morass, and brought it to him in a pitcher. She found him lying asleep on one of those conical fairy hillocks which abound in some parts of the Highlands, and her courage failing her, instead of awaking him, she set down the pitcher by his side and returned home. He woke shortly after, and, seeing the food, would have begun his repast, but feeling something press heavily against his heart, he opened his waistcoat and found a beautiful smooth stone, resembling a pearl, but much larger, which had apparently been dropped into his breast while he slept. He gazed at it in admiration, and became conscious as he gazed, that a strange faculty of seeing the future as distinctly as the present, and men's real designs and motives as clearly as their actions, was miraculously imparted to him; and it is well for him that he should become so knowing at such a crisis, for the first secret he became acquainted with was that of the treachery practised against him by his mistress."

But whatever be the truth regarding the stone, or whatever its colour; or whether it was a spherical pebble or a flat circular stone with a hole in the centre, it seems to be beyond doubt that he possessed something in this way. Andrew Lang classes the Brahan Seer among the "crystal-gazers," but in this case the "gibber" (the name by which, according to Mr Lang, the Australian savages call their divining stones) does not seem to have been used by Coinneach Odhar as in any way a help to his power of divining. It was more a symbol or sign of the power which he was known to have possessed, and, in his age, the stone would give all the more appearance of credence to his strange prophecies.

This "divining" stone, by the way, figures largely in the traditional accounts of the Seer's death, as these are narrated at the present day among the older generation of natives in the Black Isle—the district in which his death is said to have taken place. The story in its main details is as follows:—On the occasion of a convivial gathering at Brahan Castle—some say that it was a great ball—there were many of the Highland gentry present. As the youthful portion were amusing themselves in the beautiful grounds or park surrounding the castle, and displaying their noble forms and features as they thought to full advantage, a party remarked in Coinneach Odhar's hearing, that such a gathering of gentlemen's children could rarely be seen. The Seer answered with a sneer, "that he saw more in the company of the children of footmen and grooms than of the children of gentlemen" (*Is mo th'ann do chlann ghillean-buird agus do chlann ghillean-stabuil na th'ann do chlann dhaoin' uaisle*), a remark which soon came to the ears of Lady Seaforth

and the other ladies present, who were so much offended and provoked at this insult, that they determined at once to have condign punishment on the once respected seer. He was forthwith ordered to be seized; and, after eluding the search of his infuriated pursuers for some time, was at last apprehended. Seeing he had no way of escape, he once more applied the magic stone to his eye, and uttered the well-known prophetic curse (which we quote later) against the Brahan family, and then threw the stone into a cow's foot-mark, which was full of water, declaring that a child would be born with two navels, or, as some say, with four thumbs and six toes, who would in course of time discover it inside a pike, and who then would be gifted with Coinneach's prophetic power. As it was the purpose of his pursuers to obtain possession of this wonderful stone, as well as of the prophet's person, search was eagerly made for it in the muddy waters of the footprint, when, lo! it was found that more water was copiously oozing from the boggy ground around, and rapidly forming a considerable lake, that effectually concealed the much-coveted stone. The waters steadily increased, and the result, as the story goes, was the formation of Loch Ussie (Oozie). The poor prophet was then taken to Chanonry Point, where the stern arm of ecclesiastical authority, with unrelenting severity, burnt him to death in a tar-barrel for witchcraft. When Coinneach Odhar was being led to the stake, fast bound with cords, Lady Seaforth exultingly declared that, having had so much unhallowed intercourse with the unseen world, he would never go to heaven. But the Seer, looking round upon her with an eye from which his impending fate had not banished the ray of a joyful

hope of rest in a future state, gravely answered—"I will go to Heaven, but you never shall; and this will be a sign whereby you can determine whether my condition after death is one of everlasting happiness or of eternal misery; a raven and a dove, swiftly flying in opposite directions will meet, and for a second hover over my ashes, on which they will instantly alight. If the raven be foremost, you have spoken truly; but if the dove, then my hope is well-founded." And, accordingly, tradition relates, that after the cruel sentence of his hard-hearted enemies had been executed upon the Brahan Seer, and his ashes lay scattered among the smouldering embers, his last prophecy was most literally fulfilled; for those messengers came speeding to the fatal spot, when the dove, with characteristic flight, closely followed by the raven, darted downwards and was first to alight on the dust of the departed Coinneach Odhar. The spot where the burning took place is supposed to be about 200 yards north-west from the Lighthouse on Chanoury Point, on the east side of the road which leads from Fortrose to Fort-George ferry.

A collection of the predictions of Coinneach Odhar has been published by the late Alexander Mackenzie, author of *Histories of the leading Highland families*, under the title of "*The Prophecies of the Brahan Seer.*" The little book has run into many editions, and one, published by Eneas Mackay, Stirling, since the author's death, has an introductory note from the pen of Mr Andrew Lang. Mr Lang, apparently, takes up the Johnson position in these matters—willing to believe if only the evidence be sufficient. Mr Lang admits that there are many stories of the Second-Sight, but he desiderates more definite testimony as

to the publication of predictions before the happening of the predicted event, and in his desire for the real facts in the case of the Brahan Seer, he pointedly asks for historical proof that he was actually tried and put to death near Fortrose in the manner which tradition relates. As to the testimony of prior publication, there seems to be no doubt that many of the Brahan Seer's predictions—for instance, the two to which we have already referred—were in circulation before their fulfilment, and as for the stories of Highland Second-Sight generally there is testimony beyond doubt which points to the fact that happenings have occurred as previously foretold by Second-Sighted men or women in the Scottish Highlands. Mr Lang himself admits that we have evidence of the recording beforehand of the Brahan Seer's prophecy regarding the deaf Seaforth. If we have so much we have proof that at least to that extent Coinneach Odhar possessed the "gift," and that in his case, so far, the "gift" was a fact. This one instance alone might suffice to prove that the fulfilment of the prediction was not due to chance coincidence, or to misstatement, or to imposture. As for particular testimony with regard to the trial and burning of the Brahan Seer, the present writer has made some effort to discover any reference to the facts in Kirk Session Records, as desiderated by Mr Lang, but the effort has proved fruitless. No Records of the time—of the Rosemarkie Parish Church at anyrate—are now extant, for the simple reason that in 1737 all the Parish Records prior to that date were burnt when the house of the then Session Clerk was consumed by fire, the Session Clerk at the time being the headmaster of the Grammar School of Fortrose in those days.



In Mackenzie's "Prophecies of the Brahan Seer," instances are given of prophecies "which might be attributed to natural shrewdness," prophecies unfulfilled, those as to the fulfilment of which there is a doubt, others wholly or partially fulfilled, and a considerable portion of the book is taken up with the well known Seaforth prophecy. In every case Mr Mackenzie has given the prophecies as they were commonly related among the older generation of Ross-shire Highlanders some fifty years ago, and these are substantially in the forms that were current for many years before then. There were diligent gleaners in this field before Mr Mackenzie published his collection, such as Mr Macintyre, teacher, Arpafeelie, and Mr A. B. MacIennan, author of "The Petty Seer," both of whom Mr Mackenzie largely quotes.

### THE SEAFORTH PREDICTION.

We begin our account of the Seer's Prophecies with the Seaforth prediction, in reference to which, by the way, Lockhart in his "Life of Sir Walter Scott," says—"Mr Morrit can testify thus far—that he heard the prophecy quoted in the Highlands at a time when Lord Seaforth had two sons alive and in good health, and that it certainly was not made after the event"; and he adds that Scott and Sir Humphrey Davy were both convinced of its truth, as also, he says, many others who had watched the latter days of Seaforth in the light of these predictions.

Bain, in his "History of Ross," thus refers to the prediction—"Between 1661 and 1679, but approximating to the former, Kenneth Odhar (dun), usually termed the Brahan Seer, a native of the Lewis, a retainer, and because of his undoubted gift, or mis-

fortune of prescience, a favourite of Seaforth's, was, during the temporary absence of that nobleman, charged at the instance of his disreputable Countess with the crime of sorcery, and burnt to death somewhere in the vicinity of Fortrose. While being led to the place of execution he delivered the prediction here subjoined, usually termed the Doom of the House of Kintail," which Mr Bain then proceeds to quote:—

“I see a Chief, the last of his House, both deaf and dumb. He will be the father of four fair sons, all of whom he shall follow to the tomb. He shall live careworn, and die mourning, knowing that the honours of his House are to be extinguished for ever, and that no future Chief of the Mackenzies shall rule in Kintail. After lamenting over the last and most promising of his sons, he himself shall sink into the grave, and the remnant of his possessions shall be inherited by a white-coifed lassie from the East, and she shall kill her sister. As a sign by which it shall be known that these things are coming to pass, there shall be four great lairds in the days of the last Seaforth (Gairloch, Chisholm, Grant, and Raasay), one of whom shall be buck-toothed, the second hare-lipped, the third half-witted, and the fourth a stammerer. Seaforth, when he looks round and sees them, may know that his sons are doomed to death, and that his broad lands shall pass away to the stranger, and that his line shall come to an end.”

Bain goes on to say that “the lady responsible for the death of the Seer was a daughter of Sir John Mackenzie of Tarbat, and if tradition is believed, a

person of more than equivocal character. She was, in fact, and pre-eminently, the evil genius of the House of Kintail, the tragedy referred to being merely her crowning act of wickedness. Her leading motive, it is alleged, seems to have been a fear lest her evil living should, through the mysterious faculty of the Seer, be accorded a greater and more clamant publicity. In those days sorcery was considered the most serious of crimes, and even when there was no powerful lady to oblige, suspicion was usually held to be sufficient evidence of the fact. Kenneth Odhar was, accordingly, charged before the Presbytery of Chanonrie with trafficking with the devil, and with a Court of such men as has been previously described, and the masterful Countess as an accuser, nothing was easier than to obtain a conviction in form."

The long and romantic story of the fulfilment of the Seaforth prediction has often been told. At the time of the death of the last Seaforth it was retailed in practically the whole press of this country. The Edinburgh "Daily Review" had a particularly well-informed account. After giving an outline of the family history of the Seaforths, and after describing how the fifth Earl, with the fidelity characteristic of his house, "true as the dial to the sun," embraced the losing side at the "'Fifteen"; fought at the head of his clan at Sheriffmuir; how in 1719 he, along with the Marquis of Tullibardine, and the Earl Marischal, made a final attempt to bring the "auld Stewarts back again"; how he was dangerously wounded in an encounter with the Government forces at Glenshiel, and compelled to abandon the vain enterprise; how he was carried on board a vessel by his clansmen, conveyed to the Western Isles, and ultimately to

France; how he was attainted by Parliament, and his estates forfeited to the Crown; how all the efforts of the Government failed to penetrate into Kintail, or to collect any rent from his faithful Macraes, whom the Seaforths had so often led victorious from many a bloody conflict, from the battle of Largs down to the Jacobite Rebellions of 1715 and 1719; and how the rents of that part of the estates were regularly collected and remitted to their exiled chief in France, with a devotion and faithfulness only to be equalled by their own countrymen when their beloved "bonnie Prince Charlie" was a wanderer, helpless and forlorn, at the mercy of his enemies, and with a reward of £30,000 at the disposal of many a poverty-stricken and starving Highlander, who would not betray his lawful Prince for all the gold in England; the article continues:—But their (the Seaforth's) downfall came at last, and the failure of the male line of this great historical family was attended with circumstances as singular as they were painful. Francis, Lord Seaforth, the last Baron of Kintail, was, says Sir Walter Scott, "a nobleman of extraordinary talents, who must have made for himself a lasting reputation, had not his political exertions been checked by painful natural infirmity." Though deaf from his sixteenth year, and afflicted also with a partial impediment of speech, he was distinguished for his attainments as well as for his intellectual activity. He took a lively interest in all questions of art and science, especially in natural history, and displayed at once his liberality and his love of art by his munificence to Sir Thomas Lawrence, in the youthful straits and struggles of that great artist, and by his patronage of other artists. Before his elevation to the peerage, Lord Seaforth

represented Ross-shire in Parliament for a number of years, and was afterwards Lord Lieutenant of the county. During the revolutionary war with France, he raised a splendid regiment of Ross-shire Highlanders (the 78th, the second which had been raised among his clan), of which he was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel Commandant, and he ultimately attained the rank of Lieutenant-General in the Army. He held for six years the office of Governor of Barbadoes, and, by his firmness and even-handed justice, he succeeded in putting an end to the practice of slave-killing, which at that time was not infrequent in the island, and was deemed by the planters a venial offence, to be punished only by a small fine. Lord Seaforth was the happy father of three (four) sons and six daughters, all of high promise; and it seemed as if he were destined to raise the illustrious house of which he was the head, to a height of honour and power greater than it had ever yet attained. But the closing years of this nobleman were darkened by calamities of the severest kind. The mismanagement of his estates in the West Indies involved him in inextricable embarrassments, and compelled him to dispose of a part of his Kintail estates—"the giftland" of the family, as it was termed—a step which his tenantry and clansmen endeavoured to avert, by offering to buy in the land for him, that it might not pass from the family. He had previously been bereaved of two of his sons, and about the time that Kintail was sold, his only remaining son, a young man of talent and eloquence, the representative in Parliament of his native county, suddenly died. The broken-hearted father lingered on for a few months, his fine intellect enfeebled by paralysis, and yet, as



Sir Walter Scott says, "not so entirely obscured but that he perceive! his deprivation as in a glass, darkly." Sometimes he was anxious and fretful because he did not see his son; sometimes he expostulated and complained that his boy had been allowed to die without seeing him; and sometimes, in a less clouded state of intellect, he was sensible of his loss in its full extent. The last "Cabarfeidh" followed his son to the grave in January 1815, and then—

Of the line of Fitzgerald remained not a male,  
To bear the proud name of the Chiefs of Kintail.

Thus the whole story conforms in remarkable detail with the previously oft-told accounts of the Brahan Seer's prediction that when there should be a deaf and dumb "Cabarfeidh" (Staghead, the Celtic designation of the Chief of the clan, taken from the family crest), the "gift-land" of their territory (Kintail) would be sold, and the male line become extinct. This prophecy was well known in the north long before its fulfilment, and was certainly not made after the event. "It connected," says Lockhart, "the fall of the house of Seaforth not only with the appearance of a deaf 'Cabarfeidh,' but with the contemporaneous appearance of various different physical misfortunes in several of the other great Highland chiefs, all of which are said to have actually occurred within the memory of the generation that has not yet passed away."

On the death of the last Earl, his estates devolved on his eldest daughter, Lady Hood, whose second husband was James Stewart Mackenzie, a member of the Galloway family, whose son, again, James A. F. Humberstone Stewart Mackenzie, a gallant soldier, and

one who worthily maintains the best traditions of the Seaforth line, is the present head of the family, which still possesses the historic Castle and lands of Brahan. "Our friend, Lady Hood," wrote Sir Walter Scott to Mr Morritt, "will now be 'Cabarfeidh' herself. She has the spirit of a chieftainess in every drop of her blood, but there are few situations in which the cleverest women are so apt to be imposed upon as in the management of landed property, more especially of a Highland estate. I do fear the accomplishment of the prophecy that, when there should be a deaf 'Cabarfeidh,' the house was to fall." The "Review" concludes thus:—"Scott's apprehensions proved only too well founded. One section after another of the estates had to be sold. The remaining portion of Kintail, the sunny braes of Ross, the church lands of Chanonry, the barony of Pluscarden, and the Island of Lews—a principality itself—were disposed of one after the other, till now nothing remains of the vast estates of this illustrious house except Brahan Castle, and a mere remnant of their ancient patrimony."

Mackenzie in his "Prophecies of the Brahan Seer" (vide the latest edition, published by Eneas Mackay of Stirling) in his account of the fulfilment of the Seaforth prediction gives a brief outline of the family history, which links up the last of the Seaforths with the Earl of the Brahan Seer's day. The third Earl (of Coinneach's day) died in 1678, and was succeeded by his eldest son, the fourth Earl, who married a daughter of the illustrious family of Herbert, Marquis of Powis, and he himself was created a Marquis by the abdicated King of St Germain's, while his wife's brother was created a Duke. His son, the fifth Earl, having engaged in the rebellion

of 1715, forfeited his estate and titles to the Crown; but in 1726 his lands were restored to him, and he, and his son after him, lived in wealth and honour as great Highland chiefs. The latter, who was by courtesy styled Lord Fortrose, represented his native county of Ross in several Parliaments about the middle of last century. In 1766, the honours of the peerage were restored to his son, who was created Viscount Fortrose, and in 1771, Earl of Seaforth; but those titles, which were Irish, did not last long, and became extinct at his death, in 1781. None of these vicissitudes were foretold in the seer's prophecy; and, in spite of them all, the family continued to prosper. That ruin which the unsuccessful rising in 1715 had brought upon many other great houses, was retrieved in the case of Seaforth, by the exercise of sovereign favour; and restored possessions and renewed honours preserved the grandeur of the race. But on the death of the last Earl, his second cousin, descended from a younger son of the third Earl and his vindictive Countess, inherited the family estates and the chieftdom of the Mackenzies, which he held for two short years, but never actually enjoyed, being slain at sea by the Mahrattas at Gheriah, in the south of India, 1783, after a gallant resistance. This descendant of the third Earl was succeeded by his brother, in whom, as the last of his race, the Seer's prophecy was accomplished. Francis Humberstone Mackenzie was certainly a very remarkable man, so remarkable that although deaf, and latterly dumb, he was, by the force of his natural abilities and the favour of fortune, able to fill an important position in the world. The "Last of the Seaforths" was born in full possession of all his faculties, and he only became deaf from the effects of

a severe attack of scarlet fever, while a boy in school. He continued to speak a little, and it was only towards the close of his life, and particularly during the last two years, that he was unable to articulate—or perhaps, unwilling to make the attempt, on finding himself the last male of his line. He may be said to have, prior to this, fairly recovered the use of speech, for he was able to converse pretty distinctly; but he was so totally deaf that all communications were made to him by signs or in writing. Yet he raised a regiment at the beginning of the great European war; he was created a British peer in 1797, as Baron Seaforth of Kintail; in 1800 he went to Barbadoes as Governor, and afterwards to Demerara and Berbice; and in 1808 he was made a Lieutenant-General. These were singular incidents in the life of a deaf and dumb man. He married a very amiable and excellent woman, Mary Proby, the daughter of a dignitary of the Church, and niece of the first Lord Carysfort, by whom he had a fine family of four sons and six daughters.

Mr Mackenzie thus refers to the end:—"When the last of the Seaforths considered his own position—deaf, and formerly dumb; when he saw his four sons, three of them rising to man's estate; and when he looked around him, and observed the peculiar marks set upon the persons of the four contemporary great Highland lairds, all in strict accordance with Coinneach's prophecy—he must have felt ill at ease, unless he was able, with the incredulous indifference of a man of the world, to spurn the idea from him as an old wife's superstition. However, fatal conviction was forced upon him, and on all those who remembered the family tradition, by the lamentable events

which filled his house with mourning. One after another his three promising sons (the fourth died young) were cut off by death. The last, who was the most distinguished of them all, for the finest qualities both of head and heart, was stricken by a sore and lingering disease, and had gone, with a part of the family, for his health, to the south of England. Lord Seaforth remained in the north, at Brahan Castle. A daily bulletin was sent to him from the sick chamber of his beloved son. One morning, the accounts being rather more favourable, the household began to rejoice, and a friend in the neighbourhood, who was visiting the chief, came down after breakfast full of the good news, and gladly imparted it to the old family piper, whom he met in front of the Castle. The aged retainer shook his head and sighed—"Na, na," he said, "he'll never recover. It's decreed that Seaforth must outlive all his four sons." This he said in allusion to the Seer's prophecy; thus his words were understood by the family; and thus members of the family had again and again repeated the strange tale. A few more posts brought to Seaforth the tidings of the death of the last of his four sons. At length, on the 11th January, 1815, Lord Seaforth died, the last of his race. His modern title became extinct. The chieftdom of the Mackenzies, divested of its rank and honour, passed away to a very remote collateral, who succeeded to no portion of the property, and the great Seaforth estates were inherited by a white-hooded lassie from the East. Lord Seaforth's eldest surviving daughter, the Honourable Mary Frederica Elizabeth Mackenzie, had married, in 1804, Admiral Sir Samuel Hood, Bart., K.B., who was Admiral of the West India station while Seaforth



himself was Governor in those islands. Sir Samuel afterwards had the chief command in the Indian seas, whither his lady accompanied him, and spent several years with him in different parts of the East Indies. He died while holding that high command, very nearly at the same time as Lord Seaforth, so that his youthful wife was a recent widow at the time, and returned home from India in her widow's weeds, to take possession of her paternal inheritance. She was thus literally a white-coifed or white-hooded lassie (that is, a young woman in widow's weeds, and a Hood by name) from the East. After some years of widowhood, Lady Hood Mackenzie married a second time, Mr Stewart, a grandson of the sixth Earl of Galloway, who assumed the name of Mackenzie, and established himself on his lady's extensive estates in the north. Thus, the possessions of Seaforth may be truly said to have passed from the male line of the ancient house of Mackenzie. And still more strikingly was this fulfilled, as regarded a large portion of these estates, when Mr and Mrs Stewart Mackenzie sold the great Island of Lewis to Sir James Matheson. After many years of happiness and prosperity, a frightful accident threw the family into mourning. Mrs Stewart Mackenzie was one day driving her younger sister, the Hon. Caroline Mackenzie, in a pony carriage, among the woods in the vicinity of Brahan Castle. Suddenly, the ponies took fright, and started off at a furious pace. Mrs Stewart Mackenzie was quite unable to check them, and both she and her sister were thrown out of the carriage much bruised and hurt. She happily soon recovered from the accident, but the injury which her sister sustained proved fatal, and, after lingering for some time in a

hopeless state, she died, to the inexpressible grief of all the members of her family. As Mrs Stewart Mackenzie was driving the carriage at the time of the accident, she may be said to have been the innocent cause of her sister's death, and thus to have fulfilled the last portion of Coinneach's prophecy which has yet been accomplished."

In "this very remarkable instance of family fate," adds Mr Mackenzie, "the prophecy was not found out after the events occurred; it had been current for generations in the Highlands, and its tardy fulfilment was marked curiously and anxiously by an entire clan and a whole county. Seaforth was respected and beloved far and near, and strangers, as well as friends and clansmen, mourned along with him the sorrows of his later years. The gradual development of the doom was watched with sympathy and grief, and the fate of Seaforth has been, during the last half-century of his life, regarded as one of the most curious instances of Second-Sight for which the inhabitants of the Highlands of Scotland have been so long celebrated."

Sir Bernard Burke, to whose "Vicissitudes of Families" we are mainly indebted for this part of the Prophecies, says:—With regard to the four Highland lairds, who were to be buck-toothed, hare-lipped, half-witted, and a stammerer—Mackenzie, Baronet of Gairloch; Chisholm of Chisholm; Grant, Baronet of Grant, and Macleod of Raasay—I am uncertain which was which. Suffice it to say, that the four lairds were marked by the above-mentioned distinguishing personal peculiarities, and all four were the contemporaries of the last of the Seaforths. Mr Mackenzie believes that Sir Hector Mackenzie of Gairloch was

the buck-toothed laird (an Tighearna Storach); the Chisholm, the hare-lipped; Grant, the half-witted; and Raasay, the stammerer, all of whom were contemporaries of the last Lord Seaforth.

The late Colonel John Constantine Stanley, son of Lord Stanley of Alderley, who married Susan Mary, eldest daughter of the late Keith William Stewart Mackenzie of Seaforth, gives an account of a curious dream by the last Lord Seaforth, which was a remarkable forecast of his loss of speech and hearing during the latter part of his life. Mr Mackenzie quotes it in his "Prophecies." "The last Lord Seaforth was born in full possession of all his faculties. When about twelve years of age scarlet fever broke out in the school at which he was boarding. All the boys who were able to be sent away were returned to their homes at once, and some fifteen or twenty boys who had taken the infection were moved into a large room, and there treated. After a week had passed, some boys naturally became worse than others, and some of them were in great danger. One evening, before dark, the attendant nurse, having left the dormitory for a few minutes, was alarmed by a cry. She instantly returned, and found Lord Seaforth in a state of great excitement. After he became calmer, he told the nurse that he had seen, soon after she had left the room, the door opposite to his bed silently open, and a hideous old woman came in. She had a wallet full of something hanging from her neck in front of her. She paused on entering, then turned to the bed close to the door, and stared steadily at one of the boys lying in it. She then passed to the foot of the next boy's bed, and, after a moment, stealthily moved up to the head, and taking from her wallet a

mallet and peg, drove the peg into his forehead. Young Seaforth said he heard the crash of the bones, though the boy never stirred. She then proceeded round the room, looking at some boys longer than others. When she came to him, his suspense was awful. He felt he could not resist or even cry out, and he never could forget, in years after, that moment's agony, when he saw her hand reaching down for a nail, and feeling his ears. At last, after a look, she slunk off, and slowly completing the circuit of the room, disappeared noiselessly through the same door by which she had entered. Then he felt the spell seemed to be taken off, and uttered the cry which had alarmed the nurse. The latter laughed at the lad's story, and told him to go to sleep. When the doctor came, an hour later, to make his rounds, he observed that the boy was feverish and excited, and asked the nurse afterwards if she knew the cause, whereupon she reported what had occurred. The doctor, struck with the story, returned to the boy's bedside and made him repeat his dream. He took it down in writing at the moment. The following day nothing eventful happened, but, in course of time, some got worse, a few indeed died, others suffered but slightly, while some, though they recovered, bore some evil trace and consequence of the fever for the rest of their lives. The doctor, to his horror, found that those whom Lord Seaforth had described as having a peg driven into their foreheads, were those who died from the fever; those whom the old hag passed by recovered, and were none the worse; whereas those she appeared to look at intently, or handled, all suffered afterwards. Lord Seaforth left his bed of sickness almost stone deaf; and, in later years, griev-

ing over the loss of his four sons, absolutely and entirely ceased to speak."

### THE SEER AND THE COUNTESS.

There are many traditional versions of the last encounter between Coinneach Odhar and the Countess who compassed his death. We have already given the account of the incident which led to the Seer's utterance of the remarkable prediction relating to the doom of the House of Seaforth. We have only the same authority—tradition—for the remarkable instance of Second-Sight which is credited to the Seer, and which is said to have been another of the reasons why Lady Seaforth sought to have him out of the way. It appears that her husband—the third Earl—was absent for some time in Paris soon after the Restoration of Charles II. He was not too dutiful in his remembrance of those he had left behind at Brahan, and the Countess, "high-minded" as she was, chafed under the thought of his continued silence and his possible ongoings among the gay Parisians. In her distress she called for the Seer, knowing that he might be able to "divine" something of his whereabouts and doings. In due time Coinneach appeared before the Countess at the Castle of Brahan, and the traditional account of the interview is as follows:—

Coinneach asked where Seaforth was supposed to be, and, on being told, he said to the Countess—"Fear not for your lord, he is safe and sound, well and hearty, merry and happy. Be satisfied," he continued, "ask no questions, let it suffice you to know that your lord is well and merry." "But," demanded the lady, "where is he? with whom is he? and is he making any preparations for coming home?" "Your lord,"



replied the Seer, "is in a magnificent room, in very fine company, and far too agreeably employed at present to think of leaving Paris." The Countess, however, thought there was something in the Seer's looks which aroused her suspicion. He spoke sneeringly of her husband's occupations, as much as to say that he could tell a disagreeable tale if he would. The lady tried entreaties, bribes, and threats to induce Coinneach to give a true account of her husband's doings, when Kenneth pulled himself together, and proceeded to say—"As you will know that which will make you unhappy, I must tell you the truth. My lord seems to have little thought of you, or of his children, or of his Highland home. I saw him in a gay-gilded room, grandly decked out in velvets, with silks and cloth of gold, and on his knees before a fair lady, his arm round her waist, and her hand pressed to his lips." At this unexpected disclosure, the rage of the lady knew no bounds, but she vented her anger on the Seer, and not on the erring husband, because the Seer had told his tale in the presence of the principal retainers of her house, so that the Earl's desertion of her for a French lady was certain to become a public scandal. She formed a sudden resolution with equal presence of mind and cruelty, and turning to the Seer, she said, "You have spoken evil of dignities, you have villified the mighty of the land; you have defamed a mighty chief in the midst of his vassals; you have abused my hospitality and outraged my feelings; you have sullied the good name of my lord in the halls of his ancestors, and you shall suffer the most signal vengeance I can inflict—you shall suffer the death." Coinneach, filled with astonishment and dismay, could not at first believe

the rage of the Countess to be serious; at all events, he expected that in the course of a few hours he would be allowed to depart in peace. But the decision of the Countess was no less violently conceived than it was promptly executed. The doom of Coinneach was sealed, and so the end came.

### THE CLAN MACKENZIE PREDICTION.

It is supposed by many that the prediction of the doom of the Seaforth, as quoted on page 156, is only a part of the prophecy uttered by the Brahan Seer at the time of his death. Bernard Burke, quoted by Mackenzie, states that Coinneach uttered the prediction "in all its horrible length; but I at present suppress the last portion of it, which is as yet unfulfilled. Every other part of the prediction has most literally and accurately come to pass, but let us earnestly hope that the course of future events may at length give the lie to the avenging curse of the Seer. The last clause of the prophecy is well known to many of those versed in Highland family tradition, and I trust that it may remain unfulfilled."

The last clause referred to is to the effect that "the raven will drink from the top of Clach an t-Seasaidh (a large angular standing stone near Muir of Ord—it is now partly broken and lying on the ground) its full of the blood of the Mackenzies for three successive days," and that "the Mackenzies will eventually be so reduced in numbers that they will all be taken in an open fishing boat (*scuta dubh*) to Ireland, whence they originally came." Some of the versions have this addition—"Glad am I," said the Seer, "that I will not live to see that day, for a bloody and destructive battle will be fought on the Muir of

Ord. A squint-eyed, pox-pitted tailor will originate the battle; for men will become so scarce in those days that each of seven women will strive hard for the squint-eyed tailor's heart and hand, and out of this strife the conflict will begin."

This addition, however, is more commonly associated with the fate of the Macraes of Kintail, who (through the tailor) will have a deadly encounter with the Macleennans, the result of which will be that a small fishing boat will bring the Macrae remnant back to Ireland, from which they will quickly return to Kintail, but only to be removed again from the land of their fathers. In connection with these events the Seer prophesied that several Macmillans would be present at a funeral at Cnoc-a-Clachain, in Kilduicn, where they should originate a quarrel, and, strange enough, although there were no Macmillans in Kintail in the Seer's day, or for long after, there was such a gathering of men of the name and such a quarrel took place at a funeral which they attended. And for years past the Macleennans have been growing more numerous in the Macrae country in Kintail, as predicted by Coinneach.

So far as the prediction refers to the Mackenzies, there is at present nothing to indicate that the clan are becoming fewer in the Highlands, although of course as regards the numbers of the Mackenzies of Seaforth the prediction has been already practically fulfilled. The part of the prophecy referring to the ravens it yet—and may it ever be—unfulfilled.

### A SEAFORTH INCIDENT.

Among Coinneach Odhar's predictions there was one, referring to Seaforth's men in the Island of Lewis,

that had a curious, if somewhat ludicrous, fulfilment. The prediction was current long before the incident (which is regarded as its fulfilment) took place. "The day will come," said the Seer, "when the Lewismen shall go forth with their hosts to battle, but they will be turned back by the jaw-bone of an animal smaller than an ass." Seaforth and his clansmen, as is well known, were Jacobites, but when Prince Charlie landed in '45 it was deemed prudent by certain of his friends that Seaforth should be out of the way. Seaforth had meantime ordered his Lewis men to be in readiness, but he and the minister of Fodderty went westwards together towards the coast near Poolewe. There they saw two ships entering the bay, having on board a large number of armed men, whom they at once recognised as Seaforth's followers from the Lews, raised and commanded by Captain Colin Mackenzie, the great-grandfather of Major Thomas Mackenzie, of the 78th Highlanders. Lord Seaforth had just been making a repast of a sheep's head, when he espied his retainers, and approaching the ships with the sheep's jawbone in his hand, he waved it towards them, and ordered them to return at once to the Lews, which command they forthwith obeyed.

### THE FAIRBURN PROPHECY.

We have already given the reference to the prophecy regarding the Fairburn Tower as it occurs in Bain's History of Ross. Mr Mackenzie thus quotes it:—"The day will come when the Mackenzies of Fairburn shall lose their entire possessions, and that branch of the clan shall disappear almost to a man from the face of the earth. Their castle shall become uninhabited, desolate, and forsaken, and a cow shall give

birth to a calf in the uppermost chamber in Fairburn Tower." The first part of this prophecy, says Mr Mackenzie, has only too literally come to pass; and within the memory of hundreds now living, and who knew Coinneach's prophecy years before it was fulfilled, the latter part—that referring to the cow calving in the uppermost chamber—has also been realised. Mr Mackenzie adds that he was personally acquainted with people whose veracity is beyond question, who knew the prophecy, and who actually took the trouble at the time to go all the way from Inverness to see the cow-mother and her offspring in the Tower, before they were taken down.

Another version is to this effect:—Coinneach said, addressing a large concourse of people—"Strange as it may appear to all those who may hear me this day, yet what I am about to tell you is true and will come to pass at the appointed time. The day will come when a cow shall give birth to a calf in the uppermost chamber (seomar uachdarach) of Fairburn Castle. The child now unborn will see it." Mr Mackenzie thus relates the fulfilment:—"When the Seer uttered this prediction, the Castle of Fairburn was in the possession of, and occupied by, a wealthy and powerful chieftain, to whom homage was paid by many of the neighbouring lairds. Its halls rang loud with sounds of music and of mirth, and happiness reigned within its portals. On its winding stone stairs trod and passed carelessly to and fro pages and liveried servants in their wigs and golden trimmings. Nothing in the world was more unlikely to happen, to all appearance, than what the Seer predicted, and Coinneach was universally ridiculed for having given utterance to what was apparently so nonsensical; but this abuse



and ridicule the Seer bore with the patient self-satisfied air of one who was fully convinced of the truth of what he uttered. Years passed by, but no sign of the fulfilment of the prophecy. The Seer, the Laird of Fairburn, and the whole of that generation were gathered to their fathers, and still no signs of the curious prediction were being realised. The Laird of Fairburn's immediate successors also followed their predecessors, and the Seer, to all appearance, was fast losing his reputation as a prophet. The Tower was latterly left uninhabited, and it soon fell into a dilapidated state of repair—its doors decayed and fell away from their hinges, one by one, until at last there was no door on the main stair from the floor to the roof. Some years after, and not long ago, the Fairburn tenant-farmer stored away some straw in the uppermost chamber of the Tower; in the process, some of the straw dropped, and was left strewn on the staircase. One of his cows on a certain day chanced to find her way to the main door of the tower, and finding it open, began to pick up the straw scattered along the stair. The animal proceeded thus, till she had actually arrived at the uppermost chamber, whence, being heavy in calf, she was unable to descend as she came. She was consequently left in the Tower until she gave birth to a fine healthy calf. They were allowed to remain there for several days, where many went to see them, after which the cow and her progeny were brought down; and Coinneach Odhar's prophecy was thus fulfilled to the letter."

#### THE MACKENZIES OF KILCOY.

Mackenzie in his "Prophecies" quotes the following lines, which for years have been recited among

the older people in the Black Isle. They refer to the Mackenzies of Kilcoy:—

Nuair a ghlaodhas paisdean tigh Chulchallaidh,  
 ‘Tha slige ar mortairean dol thairis!’  
 Thig bho Chroidh madadh ruadh  
 Bhi’s ’measg an t-shuaigh mar mhadadh-alluidh,  
 Re da-fhichead bliadhna a’s corr,  
 ‘S gum bi na chota iomadh mallachd;  
 ‘N sin tilgear e gu falamh bronach  
 Mar shean sguab air cul an doruis;  
 A’s bithidh an tuath mhor mar eunlaith sporsail,  
 ‘S an tighearnan cho bochd ris na sporais—  
 Tha beannachd ‘san onair bhoidhich,  
 A’s mallachd an dortadh na fola.

Nuair bhitheas caisteal ciar Chulchallaidh  
 Na sheasaidh fuar, agus falamh,  
 ‘S na cathagan ‘s na rocuis  
 Gu seolta sgiathail thairis,  
 Gabhaidh duine graineal comhnuidh,  
 Ri thaobh, mi-bheusal a’s salach,  
 Nach gleidh guidhe stal-phosaidh,  
 ‘S nach eisd ri cleireach no caraid,  
 Ach bho Chreag-a-chodh gu Sgire na Toiseachd  
 Gum bi muisean air toir gach caileag—  
 A’s ochan! ochan! s’ ma leon,  
 Sluigidh am balgaire suas moran talamh!

(Translation.)

When the girls of Kilcoy House cry out,  
 ‘The shell (cup) of our murderers is flowing over.’  
 A fox from Croy will come  
 Who shall be like a wolf among the people  
 During forty years and more,  
 And in his coat shall be many curses;

He shall then be thrown empty and sorrowful,  
 Like an old besom behind the door;  
 The large farmers will be like sportful birds,  
 And the lairds as poor as the sparrows—  
 There's a blessing in handsome honesty  
 And curses in the shedding of blood.

When the stern Castle of Kilcoy  
 Shall stand cold and empty,  
 And the jackdaws and the rooks  
 Are artfully flying past it,  
 A loathsome man shall then dwell  
 Beside it, indecent and filthy,  
 Who will not keep the vow of the marriage coif,  
 Listen neither to cleric nor friend;  
 But from Creag-a-Chow to Ferintosh  
 The dirty fellow will be after every girl—  
 Ochan! Ochan!! woe's me,  
 The cunning dog will swallow up much land.

The “predictions” here are not very definite, some of the references being very obscure. The “fox from Croy” has not so far been identified.

Mr Maclellan, quoted by Mackenzie, says:—“The second and last line of the first stanza refer to the following story—Towards the latter end of the seventeenth century a large number of cattle, in the Black Isle, were attacked with a strange malady, which invariably ended in madness and in death. The disease was particularly destructive on the Kilcoy and Redcastle estates, and the proprietors offered a large sum of money as a reward to any who should find a remedy. An old warlock belonging to the parish agreed to protect the cattle from the ravages of this unknown disease, for the sum offered, if they provided

him with a human sacrifice. To this ghastly proposal the lairds agreed. A large barn at Parkton was, from its secluded position, selected as a suitable place for the horrid crime, where a poor friendless man, who lived at Linwood, close to the site of the present Free Church manse, was requested, under some pretence, to appear on a certain day. The unsuspecting creature obeyed the summons of his superiors; he was instantly bound and disembowelled alive by the horrid wizard, who dried the heart, liver, kidneys, pancreas, and reduced them to powder, of which he ordered a little to be given to the diseased animals in water. Before the unfortunate victim breathed his last, he ejaculated the following imprecation:—‘Gum b’ ann nach tig an latha ’bhitheas teaghlach a Chaisteil Ruaidh gun oinseach, na teaghlach Chulchallaidh gun amadan.’ (Let the day never come when the family of Redcastle shall be without a female idiot, or the family of Kilcoy without a fool.) It appears, not only that this wild imprecation was to some extent realised, but also that the Brahan Seer, years before, knew and predicted that it would be made, and that its prayer would be ultimately granted.”

### THE MACKENZIES OF ROSEHAUGH.

Of a strain different from those referring to the Kilcoy Mackenzies there are a couple of stanzas, more widely quoted, relating to the Mackenzies of Rosehaugh, which are attributed to Coinneach Odhar. As narrated in the Black Isle and Wester Ross they are as follows:—

Bheir Tanaistear Chlann Choinnich  
 Rocus ban as a choille;  
 'S bheir e ceile bho tigh-ciuil

Le a mhuinntir 'na aghaidh;  
 'S gum bi' n Tanaistear mor  
 Ann an gnìomh 's an ceann-labhairt,  
 'Nuair bhios am Pap' anns an Roimh  
 Air a thilgeadh dheth chathair.

Thall fa chomhar Creag-a-Chodh  
 Comhnuichidh taillear caol adhar;  
 'S Seumas gorach mar thighearn,  
 'S Seumas glic mar fhear tomhais—  
 A mharcaicheas gun srian  
 Air loth fhiadhaich a roghainn;  
 Ach cuiridh mor-chuis gun chiall  
 'N aite siol nam fiadh siol nan gobhar;  
 'S tuitidh an t-Eilean-dubh briagha  
 Fuidh riaghladh iasgairean Auch.

(Translation.)

The heir (or chief) of the Mackenzies will take  
 A "white" rook out of the wood,  
 And will take a wife from a music house  
 With his people against him!  
 And the heir will be great  
 In deeds and as an orator,  
 When the Pope in Rome  
 Will be thrown off his throne.

Over opposite Creag-a-Chow  
 Will dwell a diminutive lean tailor,  
 Also Foolish James as the laird,  
 And Wise James as a measurer,  
 Who will ride without a bridle  
 The wild colt of his choice;  
 But foolish pride without sense  
 Will put in the place of the seed of the  
 deer the seed of the goat;



And the beautiful Black Isle will fall  
Under the management of the fishermen of  
Avoch.

There is much doubt in regard to portions of the foregoing. It is said to be a fact that one of the Mackenzies of Rosehaugh had taken his wife from a music saloon in one of our southern cities, and that his people were very much against him for so doing. One of them, Sir George, no doubt was "great in deeds and as an orator." Referring to the first six lines of the second stanza, Mr MacLennan is again our authority for the following:—"I have been hearing these lines discussed since I was a boy, and being a native of Rosehaugh, I took a special interest in everything concerning it. The first two lines I was repeatedly informed, referred to a pious man who lived on the estate of Bennetsfield, opposite Craigiehow, when 'Seumas Gorach' (Foolish James referred to in the third line) was proprietor of Rosehaugh. This godly man, who was contemporary with Foolish James, often warned him of his end, and predicted his fate if he did not mend his ways; and as he thus 'cut' his bounds for him, he is supposed to be the 'diminutive lean tailor.' He was well known. We all knew 'Foolish James.' The fourth line refers to James Maclaren, who lived at Rosehaugh most of the time during which the last two Mackenzies ruled over it, and only died two years ago. He was an odd character, but a very straightforward man; often rebuked 'Foolish James' for the reckless and fearless manner in which he rode about, and set bounds before the 'foolish' laird, which he was not allowed to pass. Maclaren was, on that account, believed to be the 'measurer' referred to by

the Seer. The fifth and six lines are supposed to apply to the wife fancied by Mackenzie in a 'dancing saloon,' who was always considered the 'wild colt,' at whose instigation he rode so recklessly and foolishly." The predictions referred to in the seventh and eighth lines have been most literally fulfilled, for there can be no doubt that "foolish pride without sense" has secured, for the present at least, the seed of the goat where the seed of the deer used to rule. The deer, and the deer's horns, as is well known, are the armorial bearings of the Mackenzies, while the goat is that of the Fletchers, who now rule in Rosehaugh, on the ruins of its once great and famous "Cabar-feidh." Referring to this, Mr Mackenzie says that the first Fletcher of Rosehaugh was the son of an Avoch fisherman—the son of a Mr Jack, who followed that honourable avocation in this humble village for many years; afterwards left the place and went to Elgin, where he commenced business as a small general dealer; that some of the boys—his sons—exhibited a peculiar smartness while at school; that this was noticed by a lady relative of their mother, an aunt, of the name of Fletcher, who encouraged and helped on the education of the boys, and who took one or more of them to her own home, and brought them up; afterwards they found their way south, and ultimately became successful merchants and landed proprietors. In this connection it will be of interest to quote from "Walford's County Families of the United Kingdom":—"Fletcher, James, Esq. of Rosehaugh, Ross-shire, son of the late Wm. Jack, Esq., by Isabel, dau. of the late Charles Fletcher, Esq., and brother of J. C. Fletcher, Esq.; b. 18—; m. 1852, Frederica Mary, dau. of John Stephen, Esq., niece of

Sir Alfred Stephen, C.B., Chief Justice of New South Wales, and widow of Alexander Hay, Esq., of the 58th Regt. . . . He assumed the name of Fletcher in lieu of his patronymic on the death of his mother in 1856."

### THE MACLEODS.

Dr Norman Macleod (the famous Dr Norman) in the autobiographical sketches which are given as an appendix to his "Life" by his brother, the Rev. Donald Macleod, has the following account of another of the Brahan Seer's prophecies. Dr Norman, in 1799, visited Dunvegan Castle, in Skye, the Macleod stronghold and one of the oldest inhabited houses in the country. He gives the following account of a remarkable circumstance which took place at the Castle on the occasion of his visit, which he considered worth recording, especially, he says, "as I am the only person now living who can attest the truth of it." Dr Norman Macleod proceeds:—"There had been a traditionary prophecy, couched in Gaelic verse, regarding the family of Macleod, which, on this occasion, received a most extraordinary fulfilment. This prophecy I have heard repeated by several persons, and most deeply do I regret that I did not take a copy of it when I could have got it. The worthy Mr Campbell of Knock, in Mull, had a very beautiful version of it, as also had my father, and so, I think, had likewise Dr Campbell of Killinver. Such prophecies were current regarding almost all old families in the Highlands; the Argyll family were of the number; and there is a prophecy regarding the Breadalbane family as yet unfulfilled, which I hope may remain so. The present Marquis of Breadalbane is fully aware of it, as are many of the connections of

the family. Of the Macleod family, it was prophesied at least a hundred years prior to the circumstance which I am about to relate.

“In the prophecy to which I am about to allude, it was foretold that when Norman, the third Norman (‘Tormad nan ’tri Tormaid’), the son of the hard-boned English lady (‘Mac na mnatha caoile cruaidhe Shassunaich’) would perish by an accidental death; that when the ‘Maidens’ of Macleod (certain well-known rocks on the coast of Macleod’s country) became the property of a Campbell; when a fox had young ones in one of the turrets of the Castle, and particularly when the Fairy enchanted banner should be for the last time exhibited, then the glory of the Macleod Family should depart; a great part of the estate should be sold to others; so that a small ‘curragh’ (a boat) would carry all the gentlemen of the name of Macleod across Loch Dunvegan; but that in times far distant another John Breac should arise, who should redeem those estates, and raise the power and honours of the house to a higher pitch than ever. Such in general terms was the prophecy. And now as to the curious coincidence of its fulfilment.

“There was, at that time, at Dunvegan, an English smith, with whom I became a favourite, and who told me, in solemn secrecy, that the iron chest which contained the ‘Fairy flag’ was to be forced open next morning; that he had arranged with Mr Hector Macdonald Buchanan to be there with his tools for that purpose.

“I was most anxious to be present, and I asked permission to that effect of Mr Buchanan (Macleod’s man of business), who granted me leave on condition that I should not inform anyone of the name of



Macleod that such was intended, and should keep it a profound secret from the Chief. This I promised and most faithfully acted on. Next morning we proceeded to the chamber in the East Turret, where was the iron chest that contained the famous flag, about which there is an interesting tradition.

"With great violence the smith tore open the lid of this iron chest; but, in doing so, a key was found under part of the covering, which would have opened the chest, had it been found in time. There was an inner case, in which was found the flag, enclosed in a wooden box of strongly scented wood. The flag consisted of a square piece of very rich silk, with crosses wrought with gold thread, and several elf-spots stitched with great care on different parts of it.

"On this occasion the melancholy news of the death of the young and promising heir of Macleod reached the Castle. 'Norman, the third Norman,' was a lieutenant of H.M.S. the 'Queen Charlotte,' which was blown up at sea, and he and the rest perished. At the same time, the rocks called 'Macleod's Maidens' were sold, in the course of that very week, to Angus Campbell of Ensay, and they are still in possession of his grandson. A fox in possession of Lieutenant Maclean, residing in the West Turret of the Castle, had young ones, which I handled, and thus all that was said in the prophecy alluded to was so far fulfilled, although I am glad the family of my chief still enjoy their ancestral possessions, and the worst part of the prophecy accordingly remains unverified. I merely state the facts of the case as they occurred, without expressing any opinion whatever as to the nature of these traditionary legends with which they were connected."



With reference to the foregoing, Mr Mackenzie says:—"The estates are still in possession of the ancient family of Macleod, and the present chief is rapidly improving the prospects of his house. The probabilities are therefore at present against our prophet. The hold of the Macleods on their estates is getting stronger instead of weaker, and the John Breac who is to be the future deliverer has not only not yet appeared, but the undesirable position of affairs requiring his services is yet, we hope, in the distant future."

The late Alex. Smith, author of "A Life Drama," in his "Summer in Skye," after a description of Dunvegan Castle, says—"Dun Kenneth's prophecy has come to pass—'In the days of Norman, son of the third Norman, there will be a noise in the doors of the people, and wailing in the house of the widow; and Macleod will not have so many gentlemen of his name as will row a five-oared boat round the Maidens.' If the last trump had been sounded at the end of the French war, no one but a Macleod would have risen out of the churchyard of Dunvegan. If you want to see a chief (of the Macleods) nowadays, you must go to London for him."

### MACLEODS OF RAASAY.

Mr Mackenzie (of the "Prophecies") narrates that during a visit to the Island of Raasay he was told of a curious prediction regarding the Macleods from an old man there, over eighty years of age, who remembered seven proprietors of Raasay, and who sorely lamented the fulfilment of the prophecy, and the decline of the good old stock, entirely in consequence of their own folly and extravagance. Since then, Mr

Mackenzie had the prediction repeated by a Kintail man in identical terms (in Gaelic) as follows:—"Dar a thig MacDhomhnuill Duibh ban; MacShimidh ceann-dearg; Sisealach claon ruadh; Mac-Coinnich mor bodhar; agus MacGille-challum cama-chasach, iar-ogha Ian bhig a Ruiga, 'se sin a MacGille-challum is miosa 'thainig na thig; cha bhi mi ann ri linn, 's cha'n fhearr leam air a bhith." (When we shall have a fair-haired Lochiel; a red haired Lovat; a squint-eyed, fair-haired Chisholm; a big deaf Mackenzie; and a bow crooked-legged MacGille-challum, who shall be the great-grandson of John Beg, or little John, of Ruiga; that MacGille-challum will be the worst that ever came or ever will come. I shall not be in existence in his day, and I have no desire that I should.) Ruiga is the name of a place in Skye. When the last Macleod of Raasay was born, it is narrated that an old sage in the district called upon his neighbour, and told him that MacGille-challum of Raasay now had an heir, and his birth was a certain forerunner of the extinction of his house. The other old man asked the sage what he meant by such unusual and disloyal remarks. "Oh," answered he, "do you not know that this is the great-grandson of John Beg of Ruiga whom Coinneach Odhar predicted would be the worst of his race." And so he proved himself to be, and also the last of his house—the estates passing from him. What is still more remarkable, the Highland lairds, with the peculiar characteristics and malformations foretold by Kenneth, preceded or were the contemporaries of the last MacGille-challum of Raasay.

## CLAN RANALD OF THE ISLES.

Coinneach foretold that—"The day will come when the old wife with the footless stocking (*cailleach nam mogan*) will drive the Lady of Clan Ranald from Nunton House, in Benbecula." This is claimed to have been fulfilled when the Macdonalds took the farm of Nunton, locally known as "*Baile na Caillich*." Old Mrs Macdonald was in the habit of wearing these primitive articles of dress, and was generally known in the district as "*Cailleach nam Mogan*." Ranald and his lady, like many more of our Highland chiefs, ultimately lost their ancient glories, and had thus to leave to another the ancient residence of the long-distinguished race of Clan Ranald of the Isles.

## THE MATHESONS OF LOCHALSH.

It was for generations reported in the West of Ross-shire that Coinneach Odhar predicted that "the day will come when the Mackenzies will lose all their possessions in Lochalsh, after which it will fall into the hands of an Englishman, who shall be distinguished by great liberality to his people, and lavish expenditure of money. He will have one son and two daughters; and, after his death, the property will revert to the Mathesons, its original possessors, who will build a Castle on *Druim-a-Dubh*, at *Balmacara*." This is said to have been fulfilled by the fact that the late Mr Lillingstone of Lochalsh was an Englishman. He was distinguished for his kindness and liberality. He had a son and two daughters. After his death, the son sold the whole of Lochalsh to Alexander Matheson, M.P. for the Counties of Ross and Cromarty. A castle has been built at Duncraig, a

considerable distance from the spot predicted by Coinneach, but the castle has yet to be built by one of the Mathesons on Druim-a-Dubh at Balmacara.

### THE LOVATS AND OTHERS.

There was known to have been many Brahan Seer predictions in connection with the Lovats, but only these fragments remain in present-day tradition:—

Thig fear tagair bho dheas,  
Mar eun bho phreas.  
Fasaìdh e mar luibh,  
'S sgaoilidh e mar shiol,  
'S cuiridh e teine ri Ardrosis.

(Translation.)

A claimant will come from the south  
Like a bird from a bush;  
He will grow like an herb;  
He will spread like seed,  
And set fire to Ardross.

The “Ardross” in the verse above refers to a place of that name near Beaully.

“Mhac Shimidh ball-dubh, a dh'fhagus an oighreachd gun an t-oighre dligheach.” (Mac Shimidh (Lovat), the black-spotted, who will leave the estate without the rightful heir.)

“An Sisealach claoon ruadh, a dh'fhagus an oighreachd gun an t-oighre dligheach.” (Chisholm, the squint-eyed, who will leave the estate without the rightful heir.)

“An tighearna storach a dh'fhagus oighreachd Ghearrloch gun an t-oighre dligheach.” (The buck-toothed laird, who will leave the estate of Gairloch without the rightful heir), are also fragments.

As to these predictions all that is known is the following from Anderson's "History of the Family of Fraser," p. 114:—"Hugh, son of the 10th Lord Lovat, was born on the 28th September, 1666. From a large black spot on his upper lip he was familiarly called Mac Shimidh Ball-dubh, i.e., black-spotted Simpson or Lovat. Three chieftains were distinguished at this time by similar deformities—(1) Mac Coinnich Glundubh, i.e., black-kneed Mackenzie; (2) Mackintosh Claon, i.e., squint-eyed Mackintosh; (3) Sisealach Cam, crooked or one-eyed Chisholm."

As for the claimants to the Lovat estates, these and their attempts for recovery are now matters of history.

### MACNEIL OF BARRA.

Coinneach Odhar predicted that "when the big-thumbed Sheriff-officer and the blind (man) of the twenty-four fingers shall be together in Barra, Macneil of Barra may be making ready for the flitting." (Nuair a bitheas maor nan ordgan mora agus dall nan ceithir-meoraibh-fichead comhla ann am Barraidh, faodaidh MacNeill Bharraidh 'bhi deanamh deiseil na h-imirich). This prediction, which was known in Barra for generations, has been most literally fulfilled. On a certain occasion, "the blind of the twenty-four fingers," so called from having six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot, left Benbecula on a tour, to collect alms in South Uist. Being successful there, he decided upon visiting Barra before returning home. Arriving at the Ferry—the isthmus which separates South Uist from Barra—he met "Maor nan Ordagan mora," and they crossed the Kyle in the same boat. It was afterwards found that the officer



was actually on his way to serve a summons of ejectment on the laird of Barra; and Macneil not only had to make ready for, but had indeed to make a flitting. These are well attested facts.

### CULLODEN.

There are two predictions of Coinneach's which are held as having been fulfilled in the battle of Culloden Moor—the last fought on British soil. Passing Millburn, on the outskirts of Inverness, one day, and noticing the old mill there, he said—"The day will come when thy wheel shall be turned for three successive days with water red with human blood; for on thy lade's bank a fierce battle shall be fought in which much blood will be spilt."

When in the Culloden district on another occasion, he is reported to have said:—"Oh, Drummossie, thy bleak moor shall, ere many generations have passed away, be stained with the best blood of the Highlands. Glad am I that I will not see that day, for it will be a fearful period; heads will be lopped off by the score, and no mercy will be shown or quarter given on either side."

### RAILWAYS AND ROADS.

Coinneach lived in the days before both, but he had his visions of something corresponding to these ubiquitous concomitants of our modern civilisation. His prediction of the railway is thus referred to by Mr Macintyre:—Coinneach Odhar foresaw the formation of a railway through the Muir of Ord, which he said "would be a sign of calamitous times." The prophecy regarding this is handed down to us in the following form:—"I would not like to live when a

black bridleless horse shall pass through the Muir of Ord"; and local tradition gives another version, viz.:—"That after four successive dry summers, a fiery chariot shall pass through the 'Blar Dubh,'" which has been very literally fulfilled.

It is held by some that what the Seer predicted was fulfilled in another way—when the Duke of Portland, before the day of railways in the north, travelled in these parts by road cars driven by steam.

Another of his prophecies ran thus—"The day will come when long strings of carriages without horses shall run between Dingwall and Inverness, and more wonderful still—between Dingwall and Skye."

Coming to roads, we have these predictions:—"The day will come when there will be a road through the hills of Ross from sea to sea, and a bridge upon every stream"; "The day will come when the hills of Ross will be strewed with ribbons"; "Raoban air gach cnoc agus drochaid air gach alltan"; "Muillinn air gach abhainn agus tigh geal air gach cnocan" (a mill on every hill and a white house on every hillock). The mills became common enough, and for "white houses" we may assume that shooting lodges, hotels, and schoolhouses supply the fulfilment.

### HOW DUNCAN WAS TO DIE.

Duncan Macrae, a Kintail man, curious to know the manner of his death, asked Coinneach if he could tell. Coinneach told him he "would die by the sword" (le bas a chladheamh). This appeared so improbable in the case of such an old man, who had taken part in so many bloody frays and invariably escaped unhurt, that the matter was almost universally discredited in the district, and by none more so than

by old Duncan himself. However, the Seer was right, for, according to the "Genealogy of the Macraes," written by the Rev. John Macrae, minister of Dingwall, who died in 1704—"Duncan being an old man in the year 1654, when General Monk, afterwards Duke of Albemarle, came to Kintail, retired from his house in Glenshiel to the hills, where, being found by some of the soldiers who had straggled from the body of the army in hopes of plunder, and who, speaking to him roughly, in a language he did not understand, he, like Old Orimarus, drew his sword, etc., and was immediately killed by them. This was all the blood that General Monk or his soldiers, amounting to 1500 men, had drawn, and all the opposition he met with, although the Earl of Middleton and Sir George Monro were within a few miles of them, and advertised of their coming, Seaforth having been sent by Middleton to the Isle of Skye and parts adjoining, to treat with the Macdonalds and the Macleods, etc."

#### STRATHPEFFER.

In Coinneach's day Strathpeffer was but a hamlet of a few huts, with its "strange water" wells that were known to possess a healing virtue even in those days. Pointing to the wells—then open and running free—he said—"Disagreeable and smelling as it now is, the day will come when the water will be under lock and key, and crowds of pleasure and health seekers will come thronging to the place for drinks of its water." This was in circulation before Dr Morrison, in 1819, first made Strathpeffer famous beyond its own neighbourhood.

One of the Seer's unfulfilled prophecies refers to

Strathpeffer. There is a hollow-sounding stone (Clach an Tiompain) there, below Nutwood House, of which Coinneach said that "the day will come when ships will ride with their cables attached to Clach an Tiompain." The stone, popularly known as the "Eagle Stone," marks the spot where the Mackenzies defeated the Munros in one of their clan feuds, the stone having been erected by the Munros in memory of their slain comrades. It is still standing, but the sea is also still about five miles away. Another version says that "if ever the Knockfarrel well stone is removed from its place, Loch Ussie will ooze out from Knockfarrel and flood Strathpeffer below so much that ships will sail up the valley and be fastened to Clach an Tiompain, and this will happen when the Clach falls three times." It has already fallen twice, but visitors to it to-day will find it so well propped up that there can be little danger of its falling the third time! Knockfarrel, with its "dry well" in the hollow of its conical summit, where a stone is said (in local tradition) to cover the cavernous interior of the hill, is visited yearly by thousands of visitors to Strathpeffer. As the tradition goes—"Fingal (the well is named after him) on one occasion visited the hill and, wishing to dry up the well, placed a large stone over it, and ever since then the water has been kept under."

### HIGHLAND CLEARANCES.

The Island of Lewis, as his birthplace, was well known to the Brahan Seer. He had several references to its future. On one occasion he predicted that "many a long waste fearinag (a once cultivated rig)

will yet be seen between Uig of the mountains and Ness of the plains." How true this has become!

On another occasion he said that "the day will come when the Big Sheep will overrun the country to its northmost shore." Whether the "big sheep" mean sheep or deer, the prediction has long ago come true. Much in the same line is this other prophecy—that "the clans will become so effeminate as to flee from their native hills before an army of sheep," both predictions being in circulation before the "coming" of the sheep to the Highlands.

A longer prophecy on similar lines has, in part, been fulfilled—for the rest, may it never be! Here it is:—"The day will come when the jaw-bone of the big sheep, or 'caoirich mhora,' will put the plough on the rafters (air an aradh); when sheep shall become so numerous that the bleating of the one shall be heard by the other from Conchra in Lochalsh to Bun-da-Loch in Kintail, they shall be at their height in price, and henceforth will go back and deteriorate, until they disappear altogether, and be so thoroughly forgotten that a man finding the jaw-bone of a sheep in a cairn, will not recognise it, or be able to tell what animal it belonged to. The ancient proprietors of the soil shall give place to strange merchant proprietors, and the whole Highlands will become one huge deer forest; the whole country will be so utterly desolated and depopulated that the crow of a cock shall not be heard north of Druim-Uachdair; the people will emigrate to islands now unknown, but which shall yet be discovered in the boundless oceans, after which the deer and other wild animals in the huge wilderness shall be exterminated and drowned by horrid black rains (siantan dubha). The people will then return and



take undisturbed possession of the lands of their ancestors."

### VARIOUS PREDICTIONS.

There are numerous predictions of a miscellaneous sort attributed to the Brahan Seer that have for generations been floating in tradition, some of them fulfilled, and others still unfulfilled.

In the Seer's day the Cromarty Firth was open and deep right up to Conon. It is possible that Coinneach, by the simple process of putting two and two together, might conceive that in the course of years the silt carried down by the Conon river would gather in immense deposits on the Firth shores and thus lead to its narrowing, especially at its upper end. Whether Coinneach thought so or not, he predicted something in that way in the following saying of his:—"Cha bu mhath leam a bhith beo an latha a bhuaileas am moile gainmhich an Alcaig agus tir a cheile" (I should not like to be alive when the sand banks at Alcaig and the shore strike—or meet). This is somewhat similar to the Findon prediction, as heard till the present day among Black Isle people:—"The day will come, however distant, when the Findon sand banks (then always under water) will form the coast line; and when that happens know for a certainty that troublesome times are at hand." As a matter of fact the silt has already considerably narrowed the width of the Firth from the point opposite Findon, up by Alcaig, and towards Conon. As for the "troublesome times," some of the Black Isle people firmly believe that these have already come—in the recent Church Union trials in the Highlands. But the Seer must have been thinking of

something even more cataclysmal than that, and it will be interesting to watch for developments.

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The prediction regarding the railway through Muir of Ord is said to be contained in the following lines:—

Nuair a bhios da eaglais an Sgìre na Toiseachd.  
 A's lamh da ordaig an I-Stian',  
 Da dhrochaid aig Sguideal nan geocaire,  
 As fear da imleag an Dunean,  
 Thig Miltearan a Carn a-chlarsair,  
 Air Carbad gun each gun srian,  
 A dh-fhagus am Blar-dubh na fhasach,  
 'Dortadh fuil le iomadh sgian;  
 A's olaidh am fitheach a thri saitheachd  
 De dh-fhuil nan Gaidheal, bho clach nam Fionn.

The literal translation runs thus:—"When there shall be two churches in the parish of Ferintosh, and a hand with two thumbs in I-Stiana, two bridges at Sguideal of the gluttons (Conon), and a man with two navels at Dunean, soldiers will come from Carn a Chlarsair (Tarradale) on a chariot without horse or bridle, which will leave the Blar-dubh (Muir of Ord) a wilderness, spilling blood with many knives; and the raven shall drink his three fulls of the blood of the Gael from the stone of Fionn." (There are two bridges at Conon, and the man with two thumbs and the other with two navels actually lived where stated; the railway passes through Muir of Ord, but to what events the rest of the prediction refers it is impossible to say.)

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The Seer predicted that "the day will come when a laird of Tulloch will bury four wives in succession,

but the fifth will bury him." This has also been current in another form:—"There will be a laird of Tulloch who will marry five wives, and the fifth will survive him." This has happened—in the case of the grandfather of the present laird, who had five wives in succession, the fifth surviving him. The prediction was current long even before the laird's first marriage.

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Coinneach foretold that the Ness bridge would be swept away by a great flood, while crowded with people, and while a man riding a white horse and a woman 'encieute' were crossing it. (When the bridge fell in 1849, a man, Matthew Campbell, and a woman, were crossing it, the arches tumbling one by one at their heels as they flew across; but they managed to reach the western shore in safety, just as the last arch was crumbling under their feet. But there was no horse.)

The Seer also foretold that before the latter prediction was fulfilled "people shall pick gooseberries from a bush growing on the stone ledge of one of the arches." (There are many who remembered this gooseberry bush.)

"The natural arch, or 'Clach tholl,' near Storehead in Assynt, will fall with a crash so loud as to cause the laird of Leadmore's cattle, twenty miles away, to break their tethers." (This was fulfilled, in 1841, Leadmore's cattle having one day strayed from home to within a few hundred yards of the arch, when it fell with such a crash as to send them home in a frantic fright, tearing everything before them. Hugh Miller refers to this prediction, as also to several others, in his "Scenes and Legends of the North of Scotland.")

Regarding the "land-grasping" Urquharts of Cromarty, Coinneach predicted "that, extensive though their possessions in the Black Isle now are, the day will come—and it is close at hand—when they will not own twenty acres in the district." (This has literally come to pass.)

"Thig an latha 's am faicear laraichean Sasunnach air an tarruing le srianan corcaich seachad air cul Tom-na-hiuraich." (The day will come when English mares, with hempen bridles, shall be led round the back of Tomnahurich.) (This is held to have been fulfilled in the construction of the Caledonian Canal.)

"The day will come when Tomnahurich" (or, as he called it, Tom-na-sithichean, or the Fairy Hill) "will be under lock and key, and the fairies secured within." (There is now the well known Tomnahurich Cemetery there.)

"The day will come when fire and water shall run in streams through all the streets and lanes of Inverness." (Gas and water.)

"When two false teachers shall come across the seas, who will revolutionise the religion of the land, and nine bridges shall span the Ness, the Highlands will be overrun by ministers without grace and women without shame."

"A bald black girl will be born at the back of the Church of Gairloch" (Beirear nighean mhaol dubh air cul Eaglais Ghearrloch). (This has been fulfilled.)

"A white cow will give birth to a calf in the garden behind Gairloch House." "A black hornless cow (Bo mhaol dubh) will give birth to a calf with two heads." (These predictions were well known to people before they came to pass.)

"When the river Beauly is dried up three times,

and a 'scaly salmon' or royal sturgeon, is caught in the river, that will be a time of great trial." Nuair a thraoghas abhainn na Manachain tri uairean, agus a ghlacair Bradan Sligeach air grunn na h-aibhne, 's ann an sin a bhitheas an deuchainn ghoirt.) (The river has been already dried up twice, the last time in 1826, and a 'Bradan Sligeach,' or royal sturgeon, has been caught in the estuary of the Beaully on at least two occasions.)

In connection with the battle, or battles, at Cille-Chriosd and the Muir of Ord, the Seer foretold that "Fear Ruadh an Uird (the Red Laird of Ord) would be carried home, wounded, on blankets." (It is not known whether this refers to a future event or to the Cille-Chriosd traditions.)

"When Loch Shiel, in Kintail, shall become so narrow that a man can leap across it, the salmon shall desert the Loch and the River Shiel." (The circumstances here are similar to those referred to in the Findon and Alcaig predictions, already referred to.)

"When a wood on the Muir of Ord grows to a man's height, regiments of soldiers shall be seen there drawn up in battle order." (May this refer to the annual trainings of the Militia which used to take place at the Muir?)

"The time will come when dram shops will be so plentiful that one may be met with at the head of almost every furrow." (Thig an latha 's am bi tighean-oil cho lionmhor 's nach mor nach fhaicear tigh-osda aig ceann gach claise.)

"Policemen will become so numerous in every town they may be met with at the corner of every street."

"Travelling merchants" (pedlars and hawkers)



“will be so plentiful that a person can scarcely walk a mile on the public highway without meeting one of them.”

“The day will come when a fox will rear a litter of cubs on the hearthstone of Castle Downie.”

“The day will come when a fox, white as snow, will be killed on the west coast of Sutherlandshire.”

“The day will come when a wild deer will be caught alive at Chanonry Point, in the Black Isle.” (These last three have come to pass.)

“A dun, hornless cow (supposed to mean a steamer) will appear in the Minch and make a geum (or bellow) which will knock the six chimneys off Gairloch House.” (Thig bomhail odhar a steach an t-Aite-mor agus leigeas i geum aiste 'chuireas na se beannagan dheth an Tigh Dhige.) The present “Tigh Dhige” has the exact number of chimneys—six, but they have not yet fallen off.

## UNFULFILLED PREDICTIONS.

Besides those already given in preceding pages, the following are several of the Brahan Seer's prophecies still unfulfilled:—

“The day will come when a river in Wester Ross shall be dried up.”

“At bleak Runish in Lochs, they will spoil and devour, at the foot of the crags, and will split heads by the score.”

“The day will come when a raven, attired in plaid and bonnet, will drink his full of human blood on ‘Fionn-bheinn,’ three times a day, for three successive days.”

“The day will come when there shall be such dire persecution and bloodshed in the county of Sutherland, that people can ford the river Oykel dryshod, over dead men's bodies.”

“A severe battle will be fought at Ardelve market stance, in Lochalsh, when the slaughter will be so great that people can cross the ferry over dead men's bodies. The battle will be finally decided by a powerful man and his five sons, who will come across from the Strath (the Achamore district).”

“A battle will be fought at Ault-nan-Torcan, in the Lewis, which will be a bloody one indeed. It will truly take place, though the time may be far hence, but woe to the mothers of sucklings that day. The defeated host will continue to be cut down till it reaches Ard-a-chaolais (a place nearly seven miles from Ault-nan-Torcan), and there the swords will make terrible havoc.”

“When a holly bush (or tree) shall grow out of the face of the rock at Torr-a-Chuilinn (Kintail) to a

size sufficiently large to make a shaft for a 'carn-slaoid' (sledge-cart), a battle will be fought there."

Another prediction which has been current for generations, but, happily, still unfulfilled, is to the effect that a large stone standing on the hill opposite Scallisaig farm-house, in Glenelg, will fall and kill a man. The boulder and the prediction are well known among the people of the district to-day.

"A loch above Beaully will burst through its banks and destroy in its rush a village in its vicinity."

The Seer said, speaking of Beaully—"The day will come, however distant, when 'Cnoc na Rath' will be in the centre of the village." (The prophecy has to some extent been fulfilled, for the new public school is within a few yards of the Cnoc; villas are rising in the neighbourhood, and the railway almost encircles it.)

"The day will come when the Canonry of Ross (Fortrose Cathedral), full of the Mackenzies, will fall with a fearful crash." (The Canonry is the principal burying-place of the Clan, but, although a ruin, is still standing.)

"However unlikely it may now appear, the Island of Lews will be laid waste by a destructive war, which will continue till the contending armies, slaughtering each other as they proceed, shall reach Tarbert in Harris. In the Caws of Tarbert, the retreating host will suddenly halt; an onslaught, led by a left-handed Macleod, called Donald, son of Donald, son of Donald, will then be made upon the pursuers. The only weapon in this champion's hand will be a black sooty cabar, taken off a neighbouring hut; but his intrepidity and courage will so inspirit the fugitives that they will fight like mighty men, and overpower their pursuers. The Lews will then enjoy a long period of repose."









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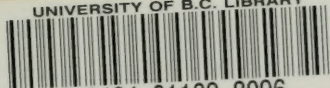
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